





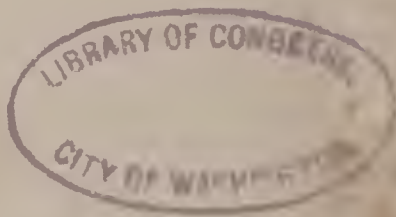
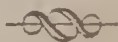


THE
CITIES OF THE PLAIN,
WITH
OTHER POEMS.

BY SUMNER LINCOLN FAIRFIELD.

Flattery cannot add nor Envy take
Ought that I wish to have or fear to lose.
Lillo.

THIRD EDITION.



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TO

JAMES G. PERCIVAL, M. D.

THE POEM OF THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN

• IS DEDICATED BY ONE

WHO, AS A MAN, RESPECTS HIS CHARACTER,

AND, AS A POET, ADMIRES HIS WRITINGS.



THE AUTHOR TO THE READER.

AN affected contempt for all the comforts and elegancies of life is the most indubitable symptom of that malady which so generally prevails among sickly sentimentalists and secret perpetrators of rhyme. Their genius is so ethereal, their taste so refined, and their sensibilities so acute, that a pecuniary proposition would be both an inexpressible offence and an immedicable injury. The burden of their freewill lays is still the immeasurable sublimity of Genius and the excessive meanness of gold. Like old mendacious Seneca, surrounded by plenty, they eulogize the poverty they never experienced; and labour to the extent of their limited capacities, to disguise reality under the mask of romance, and mislead the warm affections but uncertain powers of youth into the elysian path of beggary. Or, fool-hardy in their profitless adventure, they resolve, if possible, to deprive some of their disciples of the little sense they possess, and thus reduce them to their own condition. Nothing can be more utterly contemptible, and abhorrent to the peculiar intellectual refinement of the Nineteenth Century, than such unbounded folly. When these affectedly sensitive versifiers attempt to depreciate the advantages of a comfortable income, and exalt the glories of poverty, they at once expose the shallowness of their pretensions, and subject themselves to the derision of the world. The hope of fame is intimately connected with the desire of ease, and this can be acquired only by

that gold which is hurtful but in its unprincipled misuse. When the mind is racked by anxiety, and skeleton starvation stands before the hollow eye, where is Genius? where is poetry? where are the Pierian ecstasies which jingling rhymers, with bells attached to their particoloured bonnets, scatter around them in the inebriation of their morris dance? Poets have left their garrets, and laid aside their eccentricities. Their superiority to the common world does not display itself in the haughty assumption of exclusive prerogative, but in purity of purpose, simplicity of heart and loftiness of original mind. They are men; and in the ordinary affairs of life, they are guided by the same motives, and predisposed by the same desires which actuate all their species. Did famished Otway look into futurity for fame, or around him for bread, when he was writing the 'Venice Preserved?' During his last three days of famine, what tortured the soul of Chatterton?—the want of gold. What roused the burdened spirit of Goldsmith in the darkness of his prison-house to compose the inimitable 'Vicar of Wakefield?'—the hope of release. What compelled Steele to write a political pamphlet in three hours? the necessity of paying for a dinner. What immured Dr Johnson among the foul courts of St Lambert's Alley? the dread of a constable. What has awakened the indolent mind and strengthened the feeling heart amidst midnight studies in every age? the hope of ultimate competence more than the love of glory.

Great minds have struggled on through all the evils of poverty, persecution and scorn; but that which they philosophically endured they did not idly praise. They knew too well the terrors of want to indulge in any utopian panegyric of Pandora's crowning plague; though they bore the complicated evils of their lot, if not without repining, yet without useless complaint. They felt that whatever might be the inherent or attendant vices of opulence and luxury, poverty and privation were a

terror and a judgment. Though they shrunk not from the frown of the critical Mephistopheles—the Dennis of their day, and though they dared to deny a profane sacrifice of principle on the altar of Belial, yet they accepted, when they could obtain, the just reward of their labours, without affecting offence at apprehended bribery, or disavowing the merit to which they felt themselves entitled. With such gigantic intellects, the honest consciousness of deserving, in its modest pride, overcame all excessive reluctance to receive the recompense which years of thought and toil had earned. From the illiterate era of Lydgate to the intellectual age of Byron, the world have held that the flowers of poetry are immarcescible, whether they spring up among the snows of Siberia or in the sunny vales of Piedmont; and some even of the true prophets of Castaly, who were either under no fiscal apprehensions or had resolved to depreciate what they could not acquire, have lent themselves to favour such miserable conceits, by asserting that the hope of reward tends rather

“ To slacken virtue and abate her edge
Than prompt her to do ought may merit praise.”—

when they well knew that the misuse of any individual good can never be accompanied by a tithe of the evil which the general want of that good inflicts upon society.

“ *Quis virtutem amplectitur si ipsam, præmia tollas?*”—

The author of this collection of Poems—the casual labour of four eventful years—cannot felicitate himself upon the accomplishment of all which his own conceptions and the liberal patronage of the Public have called upon him to perform. After long and patient revision, at the expense of much time and thought, many things worthy of correction may have escaped an eye too accustomed to embodied thoughts and images to distinguish errors. But he is satisfied that no temptation has led him into

the paths of Wycherly or Shelley; and well convinced that the moralist cannot arraign, nor ingenuous modesty shrink from any of the poems which compose this Volume. The Cities of the Plain and some of the lesser poems first appeared in England, and subsequently in Boston. In the preparation of this volume for the press, more than two hundred lines have been omitted from *The Sisters of St Clara*; for the writer feared that he had committed the fault which characterised the Austrian Cabinet in its wars with Napoleon; by extending his powers, namely, he had weakened their effect. The want of experience must be some apology for the errors of early youth.

The author has cheerfully encountered many difficulties in his desire to accomplish the beau ideal of his solitary imaginations. How far he has succeeded, is a question which rests not with his interested judgment.

THE INVOCATION.

SPIRIT of Light and Love! whose power is o'er
The lonely poet's midnight thought, whate'er
Thy unknown properties, or like the breeze
Impalpable, the star of the strange mind,
Whose far rays wander through the maze of life,
Revealing joy and grief, or human shape
Lone dwelling amid silent solitudes,
Nymph, Muse, Olympic oread, unseen
Save by the prophet's eye when twilight comes
With its array of visions—wheresoe'er
The glory of thy beauty beams, among
The ancient woods of thy proud dwelling place
Parnassus, or the fair Ægean Isles,
Or by the haunted stream of Helicon,
Gushing mid flowers that skirt its holy banks,
To great Apollo sacred and The Nine;
Or mid the blue arcades of yonder sky,
Where Dian bathes in brightness, and the stars
Along the azure firmament appear
With each its glorious angel—Spirit, come!
Come from thy home of mystery and power
And shed elysium o'er a suffering heart!

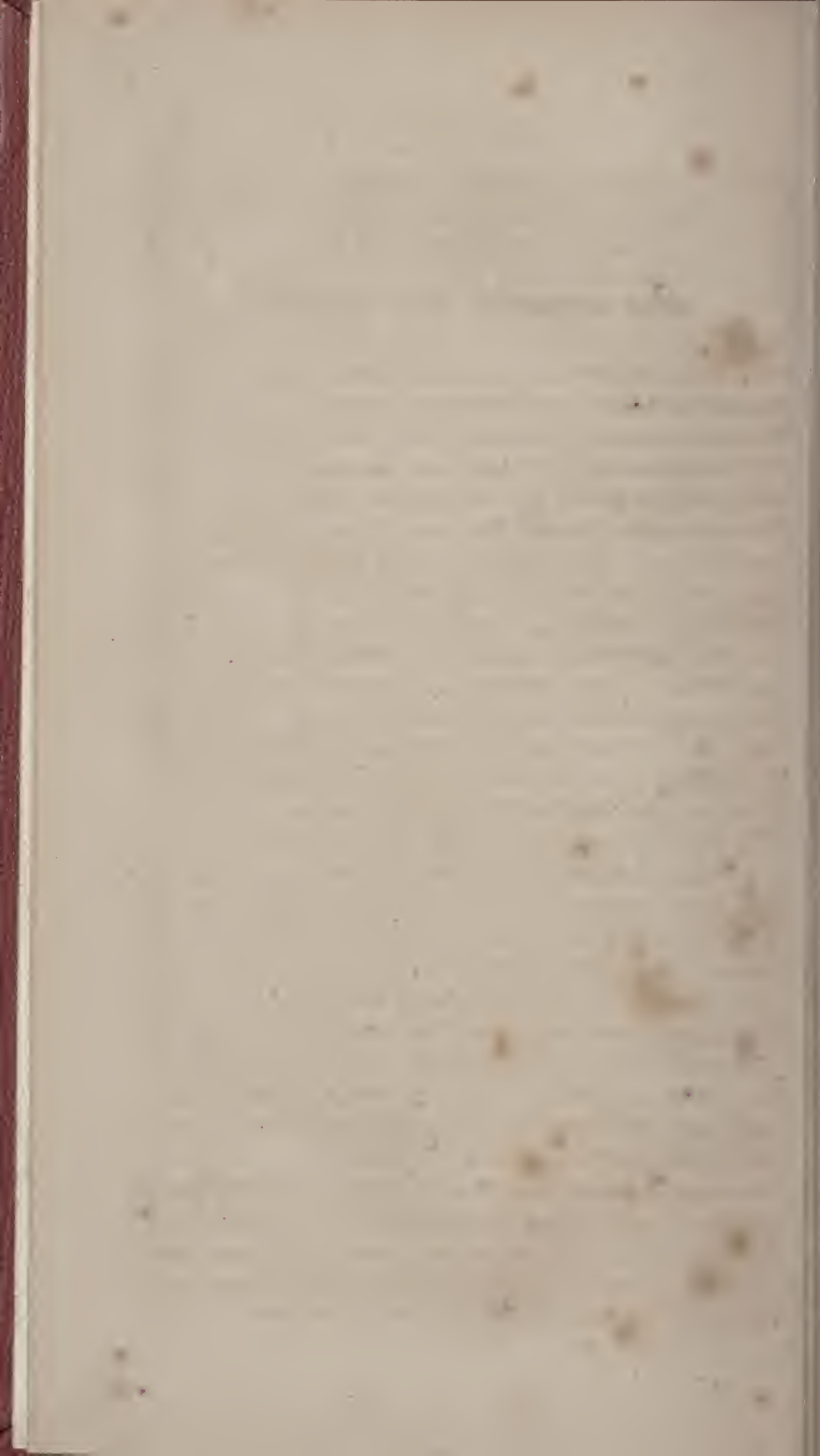
In the sweet hours of childhood (even now
The memory is pleasant) I dwelt lone,
For the vast shadow of Death's form had passed
Over the high hopes of my birth—and so
I did become a solitary boy,
Seldom revertible from silent moods,
Sudden of feeling, proud yet not unkind,
And full of sympathies that lay inurned.

The fluctuating forest, where the winds
Of autumn swept along in hollow gusts,
Scattering the yellow leaves, and o'er the heavens
Roared among surging clouds; the broad bold rock,
That overhung the torrent, whose wild foam
Drizzled on every stunted shrub and bush,
That hung upon its perpendicular sides;
The winter cabin, with its ghastly group
Of figures moving in the torchlight dim;
The silence of the solemn night, when snows,
Amid the pale and troubled moonlight, came
Thickly o'er all the desolated earth,
As from my window I looked forth and felt
That my own pathway through a cruel world
Might be as cold and stormy:—These to me
Were hidden harmonies and secret joys,
Full of high heart and deep morality
And visionary sanctitude; for then
My spirit drank the incense of thy shrine,
The holy breathings of thy temple's court,
Thou Minister of Music!—on me came,
E'en at that early hour, a mighty awe,
A reverend majesty unseen but felt,
A strong up-gushing passion, that went o'er
The bosom like a flood o'er golden sands.
Then fairies, with their cowslip bonnets, robes
Of webbed gossamer, and moonlight harps,
Sung summer evening songs; and from the depths
Of the great ocean mermen with their maids,
While I walked on the sea-shore, gathered round,
And the clear air was full of voices, sweet
As the low whisper of the budding flower,
Chanting the beauty of the coral grove
And the fair mysteries of ocean. Then
I little recked of care or grief—for thou
Wert with me when my gladsome heart arose
Above the ills that petty hate could wreak,

And the night season was my paradise.
Now other days are mine, more perfect powers,
But deeper sorrows, and the world hath lost
Its smile, howe'er illusive, still most sweet
In the romance of youth; and I am bound
On a dark voyage o'er a swirling sea
Where nought but ice-isles heave along the wave.
Yet good from evil may eventuate
And truth from falsehood and an after life
Of peace and mild content from a dark youth
Of tempest and disaster; as the streams,
That gladden the green valleys and rejoice
The laughing meadows in the spring, come down
From icy pinnacles and glacier steeps
The realms of frost and deadness. Unto Thee,
Beautiful Spirit! from the Eternal Mind
Angel to men, I will devote my heart,
Though few the hours, the many cares of life
Allow me to hold sacred to thy shrine.
The orphan child of sorrow, my best pride
For years of melancholy memories
Hath been thy service and true song of praise;
And I have gloried in thee when the world
Stained thy clear mirror with its leprous breath.
For one quick passing, visionary hour
Spent in thy high communion, when the stars
Were my companions and the moon my bride,
And seraphim the prophets of my soul,
Hath been more precious unto me, than all
The pageantry of pride and pomp of art.
For Thou hast taught me to forget my grief,
The falsehood of the faithless, and the scorn
Of the thrice scorned and loathed, and all the ills
Of poverty and loneliness, and all
The wrongs that wear away the inward life,
And leave the fair tree blossomless! When woes,
Like shadows from the sepulchre, have rolled

Over my path and clouded the fair sun;
When secret hate hath blackened my good name,
And gall and wormwood mingled in the cup
That I was doomed to drain—and I beheld
No friend among my unrelenting foes:—
When in the solitary night, shut out
From the vain world, while o'er the sinking coals
Strange shadows flitted, and the lamp's dim light
Waved o'er the walls, my heart hath bled unseen
And hopelessness come o'er me, I have sought
The solace of thy smile, and found with thee
A paradise beyond the reach of worms
Whose venom hath the virulence of hell.
Blest Spirit! let me drink thy looks of love
And so blot out from my stained memory
The aspect of the fiends, on whose dark brows
I brand the curse "Be ever what ye are!"
From thine empyreal home, Goddess of Love!
Descend upon my waiting spirit now!
Spring, with her flowers and greenness and gay birds,
And blue transparent waters and clear skies,
And leafy woods and swollen waterfalls,
Smiles round, and as I speak to thee, the moon
Silvers the green vales and the wooded hills
That undulate to yon fair bay amid
The loveliest isles and headlands of the north;
And lo! how deep the shadows fall along
The pebbly shore, while the broad streaming light
Comes o'er the waters in a track of gems.
Like a young mother's eye when first it rests
Upon her child, first-born and most beloved,
Her tender beauty falls on lilac flowers
Purple and fragrant, and fair aspen trees
Fresh leaving, and fine spears of dewy grass;
And susurrating airs, sweet-scented, come
Upon me, like the memory of youth.
On such a night as this, when woods repose

And roses blow, and waters roll in song,
Spirit! amid thy sanctuary, hear
The voice of thy true worshipper, and fill
His soul with wisdom and his heart with strength
To bear all evil present or to come,
And guide his thought free from the subtle wiles
Of disbelief; so thou shalt teach thy son
Meekness of mind and gentleness of heart,
And ever prove his minister of joy,
Till, summoned from the fair and plenteous earth,
He rendereth up his last account to heaven
Of all the gifts of God!—Now to my task!



THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN.

O’ER the blue verge of summer’s glorious vault
In godlike beauty rolled the tropic sun,
Wrapt in his gorgeous splendours, like the hope,
The last pale hope that leaves us desolate,
Most radiant at the hour when dusky Night
Waves her dim pinions, and, with clouded smiles,
Looks o’er the dark’ning earth and deep blue heaven:
And, ’neath the shadow of an ancient palm,
Towering in majesty, its ample boughs,
Green in the dew, far branching round his tent,
On Mamre’s plain, in Hebron’s pleasant Land,
The Father of the Faithful sat alone.
Flowers of all hues blush’d beauty while they breath’d
Their odours o’er the scene of peace and love;
The rose, the enamour’d heart’s fair history,
The bulbul’s worship since the Lesbian maid
Transfused her burning soul into its folds;
The violet, tender as a maiden’s fame,
Whose bloom grows deeper at the kiss of air:
The rich geranium, whose colours burn
Amid the incense of its threaded leaves;
The purple lotus floating on the stream,
That seems to catch its radiance as it flows,
E’en as the prophet breathes the breath of heaven;
And each delicious thing that buds and blooms
In the far Orient—the realm of light.
Beneath the palmy shades, their noon-tide bowers,
The flocks and herds leapt up and snuff’d the air,
And feasted on the verdure wet with dew,
(That lay upon the meadows like the clouds
Upon the bright and deep expanse of heaven.)

Drinking the freshness of the evening breeze;
And plants, and flowering shrubs, and crispy grass
Lifted their drooping fibres and shrunk leaves
In silent worship unto heaven; and birds,
The happiest minstrels of eternal love,
Sung vesper hymns, while the tall cedars threw
Their solemn shadows o'er the boundless fields,
And eve's soft tinted clouds hung in the sky
In that fantastic form and wild array
Lovers adore and poets paint; and airs,
Born in the fairy realms of ether, swayed
Their filmy folds, and pictur'd magic domes
And temples pinnacled, and palaces,
And groves and gardens, and the sea-shore cliffs,
Which changed each moment like a summer dream,
Raised by the spell of necromantic power.

At his tent-door, amid the shadowy scene,
Reposed the Father of the Faithful now;
And there he led the quiet life of love,
Whose annals are good deeds and hallowed thoughts,
And purified affections—love to man,
And gratitude to God; and there he raised
Heart-felt orisons, every morn and eve,
To Him, the Supreme Good, whose works and ways,
Howe'er mysterious, are forever just;
Rendering continual homage, that His laws
In peril's hour, when many evils came
From men and things, had shielded him and kept
The light of heaven burning in his heart;
Had been to him a glory and a crown,
Earth never could confer nor take away.

Thus as he worshipped in the sanctitude
Of a forgiving heart, Three Forms, like men,
Save that their seraph brows wore majesty
That sham'd the common sons of earth, appear'd

Unsummoned guests—their sudden presence now,
Sole herald of their advent; for no sound
Of footstep rustled in the grove—no shade
Glimmered amid the twilight to reveal
Approaching visitants; and these that now
Came, strong avengers, to Gomorrah's bowers
And Admah's halls, in outward semblance seem'd
But palmers merely, destined to the shrine
Of sanctity; yet sacred was the name
Of stranger in the East, and household bread
Sealed the true bond of heart-felt brotherhood.
So the great Father of the Faithful rose
To do them reverence as his pilgrim guests,
And to their seeming and intent did suit
His hospitalities; then on their way
Held consort for a time, and treasured well
Angelic counsel humanly bestowed.

While thus they communed on their way, amid
The shadows of the oriental night;
Quick as the barque leaps o'er the cataract,
Or gossamer is borne upon the wind,
E'en in a moment's unperceived elapse,
The Glory of the Triad turned his eye
Full on the gleaming Cities of the Plain,
And his broad brow glowed like a fiery cloud,
And trumpet-like his awful voice arose,
Denouncing judgment—"They must perish!" far
Through lower and mid and upper air, and thence
Through all the starry spheres, and upward still
From heaven to heaven arose the dread decree—
All angels, from the cherub full of love
And gentleness, to the archangel throned
On thunders, crying in the voice of death,
Awfully echoed—"They must perish!"—then
The rush of mighty winds went by, and sounds
Mysterious murmured in the startled sky;

And the earth quivered, and the hill-girt sea
Through its dark mass of troubled waters heaved,
And moaned to its unfathomable abyss;
And every sable forest and bare cliff
Gave forth strange accents—and the world was full
Of fearful omens. Silent mid the Three
The awe-struck Father stood, while through the skies
Pealed the dread mandate, and the earth, aghast
With terror, to its deep foundation shrunk.
Silent he stood; how awful was the pause!
Thrice o'er the fated cities, dark as night,
A giant vision passed; thrice o'er them flashed
A fiery sword and sceptre broke in twain;
Thrice rung a warning cry, that rose unheard,
Though conscious earth did quake; then all was still—
Still as the realms of Hela, still as fear,
Whose pulse doth sound like midnight's deep-voiced
knell.

O'erpowered by terror, glory and despair,
The Shepherd Prince on earth's cold bosom fell,
And a wild vision of the woes to come,
In broken tumult, searched his burning brain.

But faith has godlike power, and holy men
May intercede, when terrors are abroad,
With God as with their chosen friend and kind.
E'en when his messengers are bolts of flame,
And thunders wake the astonished universe
In utterance of His awful destinies.
Strength to contend and fortitude to bear
Attend the heroic spirits of the Good;
Alike in desert land and watered field,
Alike in pleasure and adversity,
The strong persuasion of avoided ill
And shunn'd allurements fills the heart with joy,
And the unsinners for the guilty pray
Though destined wrath hath ratified their doom.

Upheld by faith that falters not in wo,
The Intercessor rose and cried aloud
For mercy on the guilty race;—"Slay not
"The scorner in his scoffing! shall the voice
"Of blasphemy be heard e'en in the grave?
"Oh! must they die in utmost guilt—debarr'd
"Forever from thy light and beauty, Lord?
"Beyond atonement, and the reach of hope?"
"Counsel, entreatment, menace they have heard
"In vain; their doom is fixed and cannot change."
To the blue heavens, o'ercanopied with stars,
Serene in glory—oracles of years!
In anguish then he lifted up his soul,
And yet once more besought; "Wilt thou destroy
"The sinner and the saint together, Lord?
"The son of Belial and thy covenant's heir?"
"The Righteous are redeemed," a voice replied.
Again and yet again the holy man
Implored forbearance, still, with faltering voice,
Pleading in awe with the Supreme of heaven,
To stay the hour of vengeance—but in vain!
For not among the nations, on whose pride
The signet of destruction had been set,
Was left the least redemption from the wrath
Omnipotent—most awful when deferred!
And o'er the plain of Mamre, 'neath the glow
Of the starr'd firmament, slowly in grief,
Lone as the breaking billow of the main,
The Patriarch trod his melancholy way;
Yet oft turned back to weep and gaze once more
On the doomed cities, where destruction called
Dark desolation to attend his path,
And ruin flapped the air with blood-red wings.

On Zion's hill (the name of other days)
The Father of the Faithful sought repose,
And wo fell on his heart, and dreariness.

Came o'er his spirit as he watched the storm
That gathered round the Cities of the Plain.

In starlight beauty lay the pleasant plains
Of Jordan; and on every hillock green
Slept the white flocks, that dotted the bright grass,
And imaged household bliss; the slumbering herds
Were gathered round the wells, awaiting morn
Never to dawn on them; the shepherd's crook
Leaned idly by the palm, while, mid his fold,
He watched and read the stars, and, skill'd in lore
By solitary commune, gave them names
Unfolding nature; all their potencies
O'er birth hours and successive times he knew:
How in their march they bore our fate along,
And mingled good and evil lot below
With their eccentric motions; how our life
Revolves from pleasure to calamity
In ceaseless alternations, as the stars
Describe their evolutions in the skies.
Thus to the old Chaldee heaven's watchers were
High Deities, and worship, morn and eve,
When they came forth in the blue deep of heaven
And when they faded in the morning light,
Was rendered unto them; and so he grew
Resigned to their mysterious destinies,
And they became his gods—revealing powers
Of kind or adverse lot. Or, by the side
Of fellow herdsman lying, he became
The historian of the elder days, when earth
Was full of love, and all its motions were
Sweet poetry; and then he told the tales
Of reverend eld, how winged angels came
In the world's youth, and held converse with men,
Ministering condolence to their grief,
And counsel for their guidance; how the earth
Sprung into life at His immortal word,

And forests rose from the unfathomed sea,
Blooming in beauty; and how, when their sire
Had sinn'd, and wo was born of his offence,
And troubles came, and he was driven forth
From Paradise, on diamond pinions flew
Young Hope before him on his exile way,
Winning him gently from his cherished wo,
And lighting with her smile the rugged path,
That, through the gloom of years, led unto bliss.
In such discourse and fond observance passed
The lingering night, and not a sound revealed
The terrors of the awful day to come.

The dewy glistening of the starlight groves—
The hush of the broad leaves, the scudding clouds,
Through whose dim folds full many a diamond star
Looked beautiful—the stillness and the charm
Of Night—the poet's hour of love—when heaven
Bends o'er his bosom smiling! all the scene
Breathed sweetness and blushed odours; rivulets
Glided along in music, faint and soft
As the low breathing of a new born babe,
And the trees sighed their melancholy song
To the night-breeze, so indistinct, the ear
Could catch the hum of silence; in the vale
The flow of Jordan by its reedy banks,
Where hive the honey-bees and herons build,
Mysterious rose, and melancholy notes,
(Such as float o'er the heart in rapture's hour
When lofty thoughts with inspiration burn,)
Sighed o'er the hills and mingled with the breath
Of flocks that slept upon the upland mead.
It was a lovely scene—a holy time,
A season of deep feeling, and a place
Whose garniture was love; the senses sleep,
The spirit wakes to bliss on such a night;
The outward forms of cold realities

Are mellowed into beauty, and the heart
Is lifted up into a realm of dreams
And visionries; and glory fills the mind,
And we become the pure abstracted things
Imagination pictures, when we rove
By flowery brooks or on the mountain side
Or mid the hyrst's deep solitudes and muse
On the heart's mysteries—its hopes and fears,
Its trials and its final destiny.
Life—what is human life? quick breathings sent
From the deep pulses of a bleeding heart!
Life! 'tis the shadow of the dial-stone,
The echo of the solitary bell!
Life! 'tis the music of departed days,
Dew upon earth and vapour in the sky,
A beauty and a glory—and a dream!
On such a holy night the pleasant scenes
Of earlier life recur in all their bloom,
And faded glories waken, and the heart
Is young again; the fountain of the soul,
Stirr'd by the wings of angels, brings forth joy,
That springs to being as in olden time
Heaven's daughter from the ocean's silvery foam.
But green leaves wither in the autumn winds,
And desolation marks the closing year;
Years blanch the head and harrow the quick heart,
And furrow the fair brow and crush the frame,
And leave us blighted hopes and broken hearts,
And scattered vestiges of wasted power;
And we are left alone in the cold world,
Without a friend, and to life's lingering close
Our toil must be the weary gathering-in
Of blasted fruits and mildewed flowers (that youth
Planted in gladness) and despair o'erlooks
The harvest of our agony—alas!
How deep we feel without participant
When silence slumbers on the dreamy heart!

But soon 't will prove a silence none can break,
The shadowing of oblivion! when the hopes,
That light the spirit's glorious orrery,
(The golden Chersonesus of our dreams,)
Will vanish, and the fearful night of doom
Will come, as came the tempest of despair
O'er the proud nations of the fruitful Plain.

In meek and solemn worship Haran's son
Had offered up his evening sacrifice
When the angelic visitants appeared.

From the outer gate of Sodom, reverently
The unpersuading advocate of truth
Among the faithless Punics of old days,
The moral Centaurs of a peopled waste,—
Whose nameless guilt in latter time hath grown
Into the proverb of supremest shame,
A word ineffable—arose, sole good
Mid evil, mid the bann'd sole bless'd, and bowed
Before the avenging ministers of doom.
Onward through mocking multitudes he led
The heavenly visitants, and, though reviled,
He answered not again; the holy light
Of his example, like the Hyades,
Shone in a cold and cloudy clime; to him
Truth was a triumph, virtue a reward,
And evil things the dusky hues that gave
His glory lustre; like Cyrene's sage,
He felt the troubles of humanity,
But not like him portrayed them; he was meek
And patient in his sufferance of earth's ills,
For mid the worst of wo he e'er beheld
Redeeming judgment in a holier world.
He had gone forth by Jordan's banks to pray
With heart as pure as the famed river's spring,
The fountain Paneade: and he had gazed

On Palestine's blue hills, and breathed the airs
Of Araby the Blest, while pondering o'er
The sin, the shame, the guilt, the wanton lust,
Of all who shared the mercies of the Lord
E'en with his chosen; the good man alone
Had wandered forth to pray, and more, perchance,
To lead some atheist to the tree of life.
And so he sat in Sodom's gate, and night
Look'd down upon him from her starry throne
With a mild sorrow, and her gentle dew
Fell round him in the star-light, and his heart
Grew calm beneath the blessed influence
Of that sweet hour when dove-like breezes bring
Soft odours from the flower, and the stars
Are full of glory, and the dark cold earth
Looks beautiful amid the holy light.
Wrapt in his high communion, passers-by
Blasphemed him as they went and on him threw
Reproach and scorn; like misbelievers now,
Unto his warnings rendering mad replies—
“Hoar hypocrite! thy drivelling suits thee well!”
But faithful still and reckless of his doom,
Like the first martyr dying at his shrine,
His voice was raised against all evil men,
In peril's hour his spirit slumbered not.
Strong in his faith, temptation he o'ercame,
Collusion scorned; with priests and haughty kings,
Like Agelnoth and Agobard, he held
His soul triumphant, though wassailers drowned
His fond orisons in loud mockeries.
“The mercy of the Lord doth linger long,
“His loving-kindness hath been sorely tried,”
Said Haran's chosen son; and—as he spake—
The dread destroyers entered Sodom's gate.

In ancient days ere Shiloh came, the Lord
Held commune with His chosen, as a man

With his familiar friend; his angels flew,
Invisible couriers of sightless air,
On good or evil mission, like the bolt
That lightens through immensity, till earth
Drew near: then as their glorious pinions fann'd
The dark, gross atmosphere of this lower world,
They, on the instant, took a human shape,
And clothed their heavenly essence in the garb
Of human habitude. And these that now
Left their bright thrones on men and evil things
To pour long suffering vengeance, wore the form
And did observe the usages of men,
Apparent sustenance and rest received,
Indulged discourse of earthly interests,
And held the stranger's converse for a while:
How flocks and herds did prosper; how the fields
Yielded their vintage; how the cities thrived
In commerce with the nations. Thence they spake
Of government and laws, and moral use
Of privilege vouchsafed; "Doth man retain,
"Like the sea-shell when taken from the deep,
"A living witness of his god-like birth?
"Or, like the rose-flower's spirit, doth his heart
"Derive its breath of praise from holy air?"
With downcast eyes and clouded brow, their host
Sighed mournful disallowance, and a tear
Fell from the good man's eye—it could not save
The guilty, wantoning in fearless crime!

Amid their speech a hum of multitudes
Far distant rose, and shouts and lozel cries
And imprecations, and wild blasphemies,
And howlings and loud mockeries; and a rush
Of a vast throng was heard, like autumn winds
Pent long in mountain hollows, when they burst
Forth at the dead midnight; and the deep tramp
Of feet wax'd audible, and human forms

Distincter grew in one tumultuous mass.
Nearer they came and wilder waxed their cries,
Blent with the clash of weapons, swords and spears
And instruments of carnage: confident,
Exulting in their power, no law with them
Availed to shield the guiltless, or deter
The offender, save the insolent caprice
Of hot-brained revelry, and on they came,
Like billows breaking over ocean reefs,
A fearful vision to the mariner,
And leaguered the lone dwelling, summoning
For deeds ineffable, the stranger guests.
But silent stood the Arbiters of Doom,
Though o'er their seraph brows a glory passed,
Like the revealment of electric fire
On the dark outskirts of the hurricane.
Again wild curses rose and blasphemies,
Again the summons pealed aloud—but yet
The HIGH THREE mov'd not; fear to them unknown.
And peril, they beheld the guilt and wo
Of man, with marvelling and ruth; and still
They held their awful strength unmenacing.
On pressed the maddened tumult, and the gate
Rung, shook and shivered 'neath the wild assault,
But yet their fixed gaze changed not! Vainly now
The eloquent voice of Haran's son arose,
Vain his fond prayer, his intercession vain,
His last despairing sacrifice to save
The perpetration of the unhallowed deed.
They mock'd, they spurn'd him; shouts and savage yells
And prayers and curses, intermingled, rose
Far o'er the city and the starlight skies
Echoed the startling echo—while the hearts
Of Lot's beloved fainted in their fear,
And exultation bade the throng rush on,
And seize with ruffian grasp, and bear away—
—Back fell astonished the vast multitude!

Silence stood listening for their blasphemies!
Amid the throng no voice was heard, nor sound
Of human life; like pillars in the gloom
Of Night they stood—blind, motionless and dumb!
The earth beneath them heaved, a moaning sound
Passed o'er their spirits, like the distant roll
Of chariots in the battle, or the sea
Searching the caverns of the mountain rock,
Where the proud lion meets leviathan,
And mammoth gores behemoth; then they fell
In the highway and side by side sunk down,
Victims of unseen power; they rose no more!

“Go, warn thy kindred that they tarry not,
“For wrath awaits, and vengeance is abroad;
“Loose not the girdle of thy loins—break not
“The latchet of thy sandal-shoon—away!
“The bow is bended and the arrow drawn,
“The hearts of men are branded deep with guilt
“The earth is stained with evil, and the voice
“Of stern oppression reacheth unto heaven.
“Go forth among the Zuzims, seek thy kin,
“And cry woe, woe to him who tarrieth here!
“The Chastener lifts his sword! the Avenger comes!
“Like the strong oaks of Bashan, they shall fall,
“The mighty—blasted as an autumn leaf,
“E'en in the strength of their dominion—now!
“The slayers are abroad—the storm of death
“Already thickens in the troubled air.
“Haste! haste away!”—And forth the good man went.—

—O Hope! creator of a fairy heaven!
Manna of angels! rainbow of the heart,
That, throned in heaven, doth ever rest on earth!
From our first sigh, unto our latest groan,
From the first throb until the heart is cold,
Thou art a gladness and a mockery,
A glory and a vision—thou sweet child

Of the immortal spirit! In our days
Of sorrow, with thy bland hypocrisies,
Thou dost delude us, and we love and trust
Thy beautiful illusions, though the soil
Of disappointment yet is on our souls.
Thou eldorado of the poor man's dream!
Sire of repentance! child of vain desires!
The bleeding heart clings to thee when all hope
Is madness; o'er our thoughts thou ever hold'st
Eternal empire—and thou dost console
The felon in his cell, the galley slave,
The exile and the wanderer o'er the earth,
And pour'st the balm of transitory peace
E'en on the heart that sighs o'er kindred guilt.—
Guided by thee, forth went the holy man,
And told of gathering ruin, but his sons
Held banqueting with lemans, and they scorned
The warning of their hoary sire; and e'er,
Amid the blandishments of song and dance,
The music, perfume and bewilderment
Of heart and brain—the dreamy revelries
Of a rejoicing spirit, high and proud,
His daughters listened not in danger's hour;
“Father! thy dreams ill suit the festive hall!
“Thy beggar pilgrims will o'erturn the world;
“The winged creatures of the fair blue air
“Would scorn the deed discourteous; shall they mar
“Our mirth to whom unceasing joy and love
“Are one eternal birthright? Oh! rejoice!
“The deluge hath been once—the bow is set—
“Chaos is passed—lead on the joyous dance!
“Away! away! alas, the mad old man!”
“Wo to gainsayers when the Lord commands!”
It seemed the sighing of the summer wind
Or echo of the viol, and the dance
Moved on—the banquet and the wantoning,
Thus to the last beseeching and the wail

Of agonized affection made reply
The sons of heatheness—the bitter fruit
Of many a wakeful watching—many an hour
Of toil and trouble and redeeming joy.
They scorned the prophecy and they were scorned
In its accomplishment; a father's voice,
Unheeded, called aloud on righteous heaven,
And desolation on their pride came down.
With a sick heart the son of Haran turned
From grandeur, guilt, and madness—and pursued
His lonely way with faltering steps and slow;
And oft he stopp'd and gazed and wept alone
For his doomed children—left in ruin's grasp—
Then followed on his solitary path,
Wailing and weeping, as he passed away.
Around his dwelling all was stillness now
And silvery silence, and the good man paused
In meditation on his earlier days,
When far away, in Ur of the Chaldees,
He felt the bliss of being, ere the woes
Of life came o'er him—ere his bosom knew
The canker that corrodes the hollow heart,
The last extremity of grief, the strife
Of earth and heaven—of fervent, long-tried love
With conscious worthlessness! It was the hour
When rosy Morn meets her dark sister Night
Upon the confines of their wide demesnes,
And the gray shadows darkened while nor sun,
Nor moon, nor stars, held empire o'er the world.
Dark fell the dream of other days upon
The Chaldee's heart; a vision rose before
His spirit—and he wept!—

“Haste! haste away!”

Cried the Destroyers—and the upper air
Was full of voices, crying “haste away!”
“The storm of ruin sleeps till thou art past
“The mountains of thy refuge; heaven doth bear

“The guilt of men till thou hast fled afar.
“Fly to the deep clefts of the rugged rocks,
“The mansions of the ancient hills—away!”
“Must they be left in unredeemed despair,
“Doom’d to the death of demons—they who clung
“Unto thy bosom, Love! whose smiles and tears
“Were rainbows to our bridal blessedness?
“Who were to us a treasure and a joy,
“A trouble and a triumph o’er the ills
“That ever wait our portion on the earth!
“Must they be left who laughed and leapt for joy
“Amid the green woods and the viny fields,
“Adoring the Supreme whom now they scorn?
“Oh! must they perish in their guilt?”—“Away!”
A cold, stern answer to a father’s love;
And tears gushed from his aged eyes, and grief
Swelled in his widowed bosom, as he turned
On his departure—yet such tears and woes—
So deep—so awful—even angels felt
A portion of their bitterness, though none
Flow from the sunlight fountains of their bliss.
Slowly the Orient kindled in the dawn,
And dusky vapours curled, in grotesque forms,
On vale and upland, tinged with lurid light,
That heaved in masses o’er the ancient hills.
Darkening the brow of snowy Lebanon,
And over Tabor, Hermon, and the plains
Of Ezdraelon hanging like the smoke
Of Hecla o’er Icelandic solitudes.
Forth went the Chosen Family, in haste,
And the High Three, like towers of strength, behind
Majestic marched; o’er Siddim’s purple plain,
(Late field of slaughter, where the haughty king
Chedorlaomer battled with his foes,
The rebel sovereigns of the tribute towns)
They fled in terror to the hills; and dark
And darker grew the heavens; fitful gleams

Of gory gloom threw o'er the sable skies
Unnatural blackness; bloodred clouds arose,
And all the horizon quivered as they rushed
In giant armies to the cope of heaven.
Like fiery vapours of a burning world,
They gathered round and shut out light and joy
From the devoted victims of despair.
And they, who were in after ages called
Mothers of nations, gazed in shuddering fear
Where the red banner of destruction shook
O'er Palestine's dark mountains and the towers
Of Sodom and Gomorrah; and deep sounds,
As of the sundering of the earth, arose,
And hollow moanings, as the world bewailed
The ruin of its fairest though its worst.
The birds, with open beaks and fluttering wings,
Rose from the creaking woods and fled in haste
Unto the pinnacles of mountains, crowned
With forests inaccessible, or down
Mid dells and gorges and cliff-arched ravines
Took refuge, trembling—ever and anon
Peering with terror o'er the rugged rocks,
Then shrinking quickly back; the flocks and herds
Looked up amazed as o'er the morning skies
Gathered the miracle of horror's night;
The green turf withered and the fountains turned
To poison, and the leaves in cinders dropped,
And the dark waters quivered and men's breath
Became an agony, and all the air
Seem'd panting; and the starting eye grew wild
Beholding things o'erturned and mixed and lost
In a strange chaos; 'twas a fearful time,
A desolation to the trembling heart;
And Nature groaned through all her matchless works
When Guilt called down the vengeance of the Just.

“ Time wears apace—Almighty vengeance waits
“ Flee to the caverns—to the mountains flee!
“ Look not behind, for desolation’s wings
“ Winnow the Cities of the Plain; they are,
“ They shall not be; like a forsaken bough,
“ Whose fruit doth turn to ashes, or a tower
“ Left in deserted vineyard to become
“ The dwelling of the owl and bat—so they
“ Shall be a hissing and a scorn for ever!
“ Their days are numbered and their guilt is sealed.
“ Like chaff before the whirlwind, when the storm
“ Howls o’er the hills, in all their pride and power
“ E’en in a moment they shall disappear:
“ And never more the sound of mirth—the song.
“ The voice of bridal or of banqueting,
“ The prayers of idol worship or the noise
“ Of battle shall be heard in all their realms.
“ The hour draws nigh; the sons of evil now
“ Are ripe for judgment; lo! amid the skies
“ The banner of the ‘Terrible! away!’
Thus urged the high Avengers and their cry
Was ever to all searchings into doom—
“ On! for the judgment of the LORD delays!
“ Behold! the heavens grow darker and the clouds
“ Hang in the sky like Ararat’s great ark
“ Above the drowning world—a fearful sign
“ To earth and heaven; dark stand the forest-trees
“ And leafless—verdure hath forsaken earth—
“ And bird and beast are gasping out their breath,
“ That soon will close—and yet the Cities sleep
“ The shattered elements are leagued in war—
“ Terror before and wild affright; behind,
“ Fear, feeble as the unweaned child that shrinks
“ And shudders while the tempest sweeps along!
“ Unto the mountains of thy refuge fly!”
And on they hurried; but the human heart
Lingers, like Adam near lost paradise,

Loth to forsake the objects of its love,
Cleaves to its wedded blisses and imparts
Its sweet affections, like the sun to heaven,
To all it cherished in life's earlier years.
When days of evil come and sorrows crush
Our quick and fine-toned feelings to the dust;
And we must wear the sackcloth of the heart,
And leave beloved things and pass away
When Danger's eye is on them and the sword
Is ready to devour—the spirit's tried
As in a fiery furnace; when despair
Asunder rends the bleeding bonds of love,
And to the bosom even guilt is dear,
How dreadful is the sacrifice of all
The soul hath sanctified! Without a pang,
A last, long lingering gaze that bids farewell
Forever and forever, who can part
From beings loved though lost to loveliness?
It is a bitter trial to forsake,
E'en for a season in this changeful world,
The things we cherish! strange uncertainties
Await the briefest interval—an hour
Hath changed the destinies of half the world,
A moment sundered hearts that met no more.
But, oh! to part from dear familiar scenes
And creatures of endearment and to know
Death and eternity will be between
All future meeting—'t is a cup of woe,
That burns and burns forever in the soul,
Till the grave closes o'er its agonies.
Vain, from the lips of angels, is the hest,
That bars the love of mother from her child;
Love, which is born of woe and sanctified
By suffering; knows no limit, feels no want
When fearful maladies assail; in days
Of cold adversity shares every grief,
And is a higher joy than earth affords

When sunny seasons blossom! From the fount
Of her devoted heart her spirit flows
Through every vein whose life was born in hers,—
And death may stifle but can never quench
The love whose birth-hour is eternity.
From the last hill-top, that o'erlooked the plain,
When the last glance must now be rendered back,
The last sigh given for forsaken love,
Ere from the view she sunk for ever, turned
The Victim mother once again to weep
The guilt and ruin of the loved, the lost,
The young, the beautiful; her writhen brow
Breathed anguish, and her wildly straining eyes
Sought vainly for the dwellings of the doomed!
With outstretched arms and quivering lips, she stood
In agony unuttered—unrelieved,
By sigh or tear; and so her spirit fled,
The broken heart lay bleeding, but the life
Vanished—and there, Death's chosen monument.
She stands, o'erlooking the Dead Sea, e'en now
Where herb, nor tree, nor winged bird can live,
Where all her hopes were buried in the gulf
Of desolating ruin; there she stands,
The mother dying for her children's sake,
The Niobe of nature! sculptured Love!
More beautiful than Venus in her pride!
Draw near, behold the triumph of the heart
O'er terror and the war of earth and heaven!

From every point of heaven the black clouds rolled
In masses to the zenith, and the woods
Crumbled to ashes, and unearthly sounds
Moaned in the caverns of the ancient hills,
And every rushing stream was like a flood
Of flame that burned along its blacken'd way.
There was no sun in the o'erpurpled East,
But a dark gory globe—the abode of fiends—

That like a mighty wreck, mid fire and gloom,
Tossing along the billows, but revealed
Terrors the eye did shudder to behold—
For Vengeance sat enthroned amid the skies.

While thus the Chosen fled unto the hills,
Amid the glorious oriental night,
The voice of songsters and the viol's play,
And merry music of the psaltery
And dulcimer and harp and tabret rose
Through the bright halls and chambers and sweet bowers
Of the proud, purple Cities of the Plain;
And carollings of high carousal, blent
With lozel strains and battle songs and jests
Not to be uttered in these latter days,
And maniac shouting and the long, loud laugh,
Revealing a light heart, whose breath was mirth,
That throbbed, undreading ill or pain or death,
In confidence of many joyous days
Sunny as Yemen or the paradise
Of Islam's dark-eyed houris; and the cup
Was pledged to beauty and the mazy dance
Echoed the sound of sweet-toned instruments,
And eyes voluptuous, brighter than the gems
That glittered on the full white bosom, rolled
Around the pillar'd halls, and, wantonly,
Their magic glances flashed on every heart.
Like sunbows arched along the wavy cloud,
Born of the lightning and the rain-shower, Love,
High master of the revel, threw around
His wizard glances and the throng obeyed
The eloquent behest; white bosoms heaved
Beneath transparent draperies, that gave
Mysterious beauty to the bounding limbs,
And the flushed brow and burning cheek and lip.
The rosy wines, the mellow fruits—the glow
Of thousand lights—the gushing waterfalls,

Whose music stole along the outer courts,
The bloom of nature and the flush of hope,
The shadowed forms, the winning attitudes
And the wild fever of excited sense—
All filled the brain with visions of delight
And the heart rioted in wanton bliss.—
O holy Night! unto the sage thou art,
And to the poet and the prophet e'er
A time of gladness; when, mid antique lore,
And visionary phantasies and dreams,
And glorious revelations, they become
Beings of brighter worlds than this, thou art
A season of deep counsel and high thoughts.
Or when the hollowness and falsity
Of earthly things oppress the lofty mind
In day's rude glare, thou comest with a step
So gentle that the weary heart hath rest
In thy soft shadows; but, to evil men
And evil purposes, thine hours become
The robe of all iniquity—alas!
Oh! many a deed, darker than is thy gloom,
Lies hidden in thy lone recesses here,
But, over all, there looketh forth an Eye,
To which the darkness is no covering.—

Sabea's caravan, the worshippers
Of Mythra and Zohail and Mazzaloth,
Loaded with gorgeous raiment and perfumes,
From Araby the Blest, and pearls and shells.
Pictured like rainbows or the leprous heart
Of a proud priest whose soul is sacrilege,
Upon that eve of judgment, when the Lord
Gathered his terrors for an utter war
And desolation of unrighteous men,
Had entered in Gomorrah and diffused
Gladness through all the Cities of the Plain.
Oh! then they counted on long years of wealth;

And glory and rejoicing and their hearts
Rebelled in haughty confidence; their gods
Became a jesting and a mockery;
Earth was elysium—for the world had poured
Its treasures o'er them and their lot was blessed.
Trusting their own frail pride, they scorn'd the Power,
That spanned the heavens, forgetting He could wear
Garments of vengeance and hear not the voice
Of dying supplication, when He trod.
The winepress of His wrath and on them poured
Dark retribution—when the cup of woe
Was drained unto its deepest dregs—and when
He wrapt the blazing heavens around His brow,
And in the majesty of glory came,
Earth, seas, and skies dissolving at His frown.
Far streamed the festive lights through colonnade
And banquet hall and palace bower, and forms
In bright array were flitting there, and all
The sons and daughters of the wise Chaldee
Were gay as birds of paradise; the voice
Of beauty chanted the lascivious song,
And perfume floated in the music's breath.
But, oh, the madness of the mirth! no dream
Portended woe to come; no omen taught
Mysterious prophecy; the hoary sage,
The tiar'd priest of the strong Emims failed
In knowledge of his lore; the enchanter now,
Amazed, beheld his magic science lost.
Lone stood the temples—every idol fell,
But none were there to mark the prodigy.
The starry genii held their altitudes
Indicative of no disaster now,
And not a whisper breathed that could forewarn
The terrors of the morn; so joyance leapt
In every heart until their halls grew dim,
And weary nature sought repose;—then sunk

The cities into slumber; death were not
A deeper solitude—save where the step
Of the bent pilgrim, hastening on his way,
Broke the deep silence of the cities doomed,
Or the lone caravan, departing, sent
The echoes of their many hurrying feet.

The storm of wrath had gathered and it hung
In giant folds of blackness round the skies,
Revealed, not lightened by the glorious sun,
Whose disk gloomed like an universe of blood—
A burning ocean from the hearts of men.
And the hushed atmosphere did seem alive,
And beings diabolic in the clouds
Laughed louder than the storm's mysterious roar.
Beneath the black and sundered rocks the herds
Lay gasping in their agonies, and oft
The forests and the crags fell down and crushed
The dying; yet no wind stirr'd the dead boughs,
But all the world seemed waiting—mute and still—
The bursting of the heavenly barriers.
Yet the bare, leafless, blackened forests shook,
And reeled and tore the solid earth and crashed
Down the deep precipice—and tigers howled
And famished wolves, and owls and bitterns moaned,
And vultures swooped and screamed, and eagles wheeled
Through the red scorching air and shrieked on high.
Now heaved the Earth, and deep low muttering sounds
Passed o'er her dark abysses, while above
Voices did question and reply, in words
That sounded like a deep toned organ's roll.
And these were oracles of coming doom,
But none did hear them save the Shepherd Prince
And Haran's son in Zoar—and they knelt
In prayer for all who were to perish now.
Darker and darker grew the storm; the glare
And gloom were terrible; the pause—the awe—

The riot of the hurrying elements--
The howling of the demons o'er their prey--
The bursting earth and the dissolving sky.
Wild meteors burst amid the lurid heavens
Louder than all the world's artillery,
And shattered globes of fire glared o'er the gloom.
Like hell's eternal billows through the night
Of death that dies not--horror without end.

As when the sea-flood, Orellana meets
In conflict with the ocean, every isle
Of Amazonia quivers in the shock,
So the Earth trembled when the whirlwind rose
And howled through ether with a louder roar
Than the tornado of the equinox.
Unearthly voices pealed in high command,
As every hurrying cloud of fire on high
Had its peculiar captain in the war
Of God with men. Now, at the appointed hour
Of vengeance, burst from every point of heaven
The tempest of destruction; awfully
The shattering thunders broke--the lightning fell
In one wild blaze unquenchable--a flood
Of flame as if the fountains of the skies
Were broken up and earth and nature given
A sacrifice to judgment!--Now awoke
The slumbering Cities in their agony
And utter woe, for o'er them leapt and hissed,
In serpent wreaths, the master element,
That mounted up in pyramids of flame,
As it would mingle with the burning heavens.
Ye terrors of an angry God! above,
Below, a penal world of gory light
No power could quench, and thunders, not like earth's
At intervals, but one unceasing roar,
So loud, all worlds replied; so strong, they shook
Ten thousand meteors from their sightless spheres.

Then forth, like Eblis and his legions driven
By Azrael from the gates of Paradise,
In madness rushed the myriads of the Plain.
From falling tower and crashing colonnade,
And melting roof and shattered battlement,
They leapt in raving agony—the flames
Clinging, like serpents, to their tender flesh.
Then rose the voice of wailing; then the arms
Of the young mother grew around her child,
And the son clung about his father's neck,
And lovely maidens fainted in their fear
And woke no more; then sorcerers tried their charms
In vain; and priests invoked aloud their gods
Without reply. Amid the awful storm,
Among their dying people, stood the kings,
The haughty gods of idol worshippers,
Powerless and helpless as the unweaned child,
While heaven above and hell beneath conjoined
In the destruction; and their crowned queens
And daughters beautiful and kindred high
Clung round them wailing, and ten thousand prayers
Shrieked with unnumbered curses! Towers of fire
Rose round them high as heaven, and their flesh
Consumed, and then their hollow cries and prayers
And imprecations waxed more terrible.
The awful glare for leagues around revealed
The dying nations; Jordan's swelling stream
Boiled through the furnace, and the mountain cliffs
Unto their deep foundations shivered—Earth,
A trembling mass of fiery ashes, heaved
Beneath the countless multitudes; the world
Reeled to and fro and all the heavens did seem
Ready to fall.—Hosts upon hosts now lay
Dead, and the dying fell upon them there,
The monarch and the mendicant—the prince
And peasant, the fair dame in Persian robes
And the poor outcast, side by side were thrown.

And, mid the pauses of the tempest, rose
Loud yells of agony; and demons then
Mocked their last anguish, till an angel voice,
That shook the heavens, drowned the dying groans,
And cried "It is enough!"—the skies were bright!
And on the instant, the astonished Earth
Yawned in a bottomless chasm 'neath the host
Of Sodom and Gomorrah; and the dead
And dying, mingled in a mass of fire
And blood, went down into the gulf of woe,
And burning temples, palaces and towers
Glared wildly o'er them as they fell! From depths
Dark and unmeasured, like a spectre, rose
The Dead and Deadly Sea; an outstretched arm
Quivered, at intervals, along the wave,
Once rose a shriek of Death—and all was still!

TO CLARA.

PART I.

'The robe, that, like the shroud, when once put on,
Leaves the wild heart no more to hope or fear.

Croly

WHEN from the southern land I came,
Pale as the lips I kissed in death,
A stranger to the voice of fame,
The spell of praise, the laurel wreath,
With my heart's sorrows on my brow,
And desolation in my soul,
While backward lay a waste of woe,
And fear before, to read the scroll
The spirit of my doom unfolded
With calm despair, that recks not how
The features of our fate are moulded,
So he fulfil his awful vow;—
I dreamed not then, thou gentle one!
That every earthly shape again
Could charm a heart so long undone,
And picture on the brow of pain
The bright, though shadowy form of bliss.
That changeful as the rainbow's hues,
Or April green, hath come to this
Outbreathing of the heart's cold dews;
The overflow of feelings wrought
Up to the madness of delight—
The torrent of long gathering thought,
The meteor of fate's darkest night.

But when we met, thy nameless grace
Thine eye, that floated in its light,

The heart's high heaven in thy face,
'Thy voice, that came like sounds by night,
O'er the blue waters faintly gleaming,
When earth is green, and soft, and still,
And heaven above serenely dreaming,
Each angel on his own star-hill—
All that clung round thee at that hour,
(Alas! they cling around thee yet!)
When all the thoughts of years have power,
And we can ne'er in life forget—
Far backward as I trace the scene,
'They rise before my heart and eye,
'To tell how blest I might have been—
Now, 'twere a blessed boon to die.

Why was I born to be the bane
Of all I love as genius loves?
Ah! 'tis enough, my own heart's pain,
That seeks the lonesome hilly groves,
And finds a solace and a joy,
Revelments of a happier lot,
While musing, 'neath the deep blue sky,
On all that have been, but are not.
But, 'tis my evil fate to link
Spirits with mine, for woe alone,
And bid the holy-hearted drink
The bann'd cup of enjoyment gone;
As the dark nightshade from the sun
Drinks light to feed its poison leaves,
So my heart looks on all that's done,
With that strange passion which bereaves
The hearts of others of their mirth —
'To them, however vain, a wreath
Of joy—their sole reward on earth—
'Though unto me the masque of death.
And thus it hath been from the time
My foot hath trod this desert land,

Though not a tinge of all earth's crime
Hath soiled my heart, or stained my hand
I know not why it thus should be;
My heart loves peace and gentle things,
And oft, in days when life was free,
I prayed some spirit would give me wings—
That I might look on every land,
And love each thing I looked upon.
My soul was pure, my feelings bland—
Alas for me! that time hath gone.
Yet—even yet—I bear not hate
To ought that breathes the breath of heaven:
But there's with me an evil fate,
To which my spirit hath been given,
And 'tis unmeet that I should love,
Since all I love death garners up;
No! be it mine alone to prove
The dregs of fate's unhallowed cup.

My father died ere I could tell
The love my young heart felt for him:
My sister like a blossom fell;
Her cheek grew cold, her blue eye dim,
Just as the hallowed hours came by,
When she was dearest unto me;
And vale and stream and hill and sky
Were beautiful as Araby.
And, one by one, the friends of youth
Departed to the land of dreams;
And soon I felt that friends, in sooth,
Were few as flowers by mountain streams;
And solitude came o'er me then,
And early I was taught to treasure
Lone thoughts in glimmering wood and glen.—
Now they are mine in utmost measure.
But boyhood's sorrows, though they leave
Their shadows on the spirit's dial,

Cannot by their deep spell bereave—
They herald but a darker trial;
And such 'tis mine e'en now to bear
In the sweet radiance of thine eye,
And 'tis the wildness of despair
To paint vain love, that cannot die.
Yet thus it must be—like the flower,
That sheds amid the dusky night
The rays it drank at midday hour,
My spirit pours abroad its light,
When all the beauty and the bloom,
The blessedness of love hath gone,
And left the darkness of the tomb
Upon the glory of its throne.
The hour hath come—it cannot part—
Deterring pride—one hurried deed
Hath fixed its seal upon my heart,
And ever it must throb and bleed,
Till life, and love, and anguish o'er,
The spirit soars to its first birth,
And meets on heaven's own peaceful shore
The heart it loved too well on earth.

Clara! I never named to thee
The thoughts that thronged my bosom erst,
Though, with a wild idolatry,
I loved thee, lost One! from the first;
And now it were a deadly wrong
To thee, and to thy honest fame,
Save in a sad and dirgelike song,
To speak in love thy cherished name;
But here—as from my bosom flow
Tears of despair o'er what is gone,
Thou canst but listen to such woe,
As be not thine, beloved one!
For thou canst feel the burning power
Of passion baffled in its range,

And know that hearts, in one brief hour,
Meet—blend beyond all hope of change.
Adieu! be thine the seraph's task,
To hush the murmurings of despair.
But Clara! never, never ask,
What are the sorrows that I bear.
It were unholy now to tell—
It were a blight—a blasting curse—
To thee a mockery—me a hell—
Content thee—earth could bring nought worse:
Lips sealed, when the full heart is breaking—
Eyes never closed on heaven denied—
The lingering pause—the last forsaking—
These are thy triumphs—sceptered Pride!

TO CLARA.

PART II.

Woe to the heart where passion pours its tide!
Soon sinks the flood to leave the desert there.

Croly.

THE sobbings of the midnight sea
The moan of winds through vaults of death,
The wail that warns events to be,
The awful voice that has no breath—
Such sounds come o'er the quailing bosom
When other years recur, and bring
The incense of each faded blossom
That wreathed the glowing brow of spring;
Such sounds come o'er us when we turn
To sunnier spots and happier hours,
And brightly buried feelings burn
Amid young Love's deserted bowers.

Between the hearts, whose feelings rise,
Like incense from an angel's shrine,
Before the throne of paradise,
Meet offering to the Power Divine,
There lies a gulf of boundless gloom,
Which none may pass till Fate decrees,
Till death unlocks the hollow tomb,
Revealing awful mysteries!
Doomed at their birth, in other spheres,
To sigh o'er pictures of the mind,
Through all the woes of lingering years,
That leave a burning waste behind,
Our tortured hearts too quickly feel,
Too deeply for this mortal lot,

Too lastingly for human weal—
All unforgetting—unforgot!

Time speedeth on with hurried pace,
And love and joy are left behind—
But where will close the doubtful race
Ne'er cometh into human mind.
We all must die—'tis all we know;
We all must go—we know not where;
Perchance, to skies that ever glow,
Perchance, to realms of quick despair!
It may be so—it may be not—
Doubt circles all and all must die,
Loved, hated, scorned, avenged, forgot—
Oh! what art thou, Eternity?

Our lot is low—our pride is high—
We are not what our minds create;
The elements of earth and sky
Are mingled in our web of fate.
Like sunbows thrown o'er torrents, come
Wild thoughts o'er hearts that bleed to death—
Thoughts whose rich light illumines the tomb,
When the blue sky resumes our breath.
Oh! while our burning spirits soar,
Woe binds us to our weary clay,
Till all things fade, and pain is o'er,
And forth we pass—away—away!

How thou hast felt through seasons gone,
My own despairing heart would tell,
In the low, deep, unearthly moan,
That oft hath bade thee, Love, farewell!
But I, perchance, may throw the hues
Of my own feelings over thee,
Like shadows cast o'er moonlight dews,
Or dark clouds o'er the gleaming sea;

And yet for all my heart hath known
Of anguish in the days gone by,
Thou mayst be blest as flowers just blown
Beneath the spring's transparent sky;
And few the thoughts and faint the prayers
That yet have followed me along
A path beset with many cares—
The heritage of sons of song!

I will not wrong thee, gentle one!
Thy heart hath heard the voice of woe,
And I should rue unkindness done
To part agrieved, and leave thee so;
For thou hast rendered unto me
Such solace in my wildest mood,
That thou art now my destiny—
The charm of my lone solitude!
Thine eye is bright as flowers that blow
Upon the holy Hydrasil,
And beauty beams upon thy brow
Like Odin's throne on Asgard hill;
And life and love around thee bloom
Like Heimdaller's gorgeous bow
That guides the wanderer, through the tomb,
To realms beyond all earthly woe.

But worse than vain my love for thee,
Beautiful Spirit, fancy-free!
And I must quench the light that threw
Its radiance o'er my morning skies,
And dwell no longer in the view
Of my forbidden paradise;
For what thou wert thou art not now,
And I am changed in heart and mind,—
And—thus I break my plighted vow—
And pass away like autumn's wind.

TO CLARA.

PART III.

Woes of weak hearts that never should be won,
Wrongs of deluders by themselves undone.

Croly.

Would the green curtain of the grave
Were drawn around my last cold rest,
As softly as yon shadows wave
Around the far blue mountain's breast;
For length of life is length of woe,
And human love at best deceit;
All we have known—we still shall know,
And we have met—we still must meet:
And weary grows our desert way
While every light, save Hope's, hath fled.
And that is dim as winter's day
With vainly watching o'er the dead!
Here we must mingle with the low,
And half forget our spirits' power,
And feel our burning bosoms grow
Cold as their own with every hour;
And we must watch and weep and pray
To shun the death that would be kind,
And for the need of one poor day
Wreck all the glories of the mind!
None think as we have ever thought,
Chained vassals to their daily bread;
None know the feelings that have wrought
Such triumph o'er the heart and head!
They hear a voice—they see a form,
'Tis all they think—and all they care—
They cannot catch the feelings warm,
The pride, the glory, the despair,

That pass, like evening lights, o'er all
 The moments of a spirit's life,
 Wrapping the heart within a pall
 Whose dark folds tremble in the strife!
 Dark—dark hath been, through many a scene,
 My wayward lot of varied woe,
 And settled gloom doth lower between
 Hope and ought better here below;
 For friends forsake and foes wax strong,
 And e'en the rabble bow to me—
 Hatred, disgrace, oppression, wrong,
 Have sealed my utter destiny.
 I feel not now as once I felt—
 The thrilling throb, the unbending brow,
 The unfaltering knee that never bent,
 The heart, the soul, have left me now;
 And I am doomed to wear away
 The gifts once honoured by thy praise,
 And far—how far!—from bliss astray,
 To end unknown my cheerless days.

Well, be it so!—I would not be
 One of the herd I loathe and scorn,
 For all the wealth of land and sea,
 Though 'twere as glorious as the morn.
 I would not stoop to practise guile,
 To damn my neighbour with a lie,
 To sack and plunder with a smile,
 And follow pious infamy,
 Though Eos were a world of gems,
 And I were monarch of the whole—
 Though forest leaves were diadems,
 And I God's image with a soul!—
 I have an eye, a spirit still
 For Nature in her sweetest moods:
 The silvery stream, the sunny hill,
 The majesty of solitudes;
 F

The music of the waterfall,
The vesper hymn at daylight's close,
The ragged rocks that tower o'er all,
While the grass springs, the blue sky glows.
Mid these fair scenes I half forget
The wrongs, the woes, that I have borne,
And, though my brightest star hath set,
Stretched on the cliff, I cease to mourn.
There's sweetness in the flowering grove,
There's beauty in the waveless river,
And, while I gaze abroad, I love,
Adore, and bless the mighty Giver,
And feel my spirit borne away
Beyond the things of common note,
Forgetful of my dust and clay,
On which the herd of mortals dote.
In the old days of wisdom, when
A child was born, the father wept:
He knew his soul would turn again
Back to the fount where it had slept,
When years had ta'en away his strength,
And cares had clouded his bright brow,
And he had found that all at length
Verged into woe—an endless *Now!*
So they wailed o'er the birth of one
Whose death-hour would bring joy to all
Who loved him ere his race begun,
But loved him more beneath the pall!

Clara! my strain is closing now!
'Tis the last sweep of breaking chords—
'Tis the last pulse—the last dark flow
Of the wild heart's mysterious words!
I've seen thee when thy heart was gay,
When sadness flitted o'er thy face,
In merry crowds by night and day,
And kneeling in the holy place;

And I have loved as few can love,
Without a hope, without a fear,
As the heart gushes forth above,
With the quick pulse and starting tear;
And now—(my spirit quails to think
I ne'er shall speak thy name again!)
I stand upon the utmost brink
That bounds the path of human pain.
The chain is forged--the doom is sealed--
The knell hath tolled--the hour is come!
A guiding light hath been revealed
Through the dark mazes of earth's gloom;
And I will follow on my way,
Like one whose task is finished here--
The unknown being of a day,
Whose highest rapture was a tear.
Clara! farewell! the time hath been
When I could sigh thy lovely name,
But that hath passed--and every scene
That led me on to love and fame.
The woes I bear 'twere vain to tell--
Hear all in--Love! farewell! farewell!

THE DEATH SCENE.

GLIMMERING amid the shadowy shapes that float
In sickly Fancy's vision o'er the walls
Of Death's lone room, the trembling taper burns
Dimly, and guides my fearful eye to trace
The wandering track of parting life upon
The burning brow and sallow cheek of him
Whose smile was paradise to me and mine.
The autumnal wind breathes pantingly and comes
With hollow sighs through yon high window o'er
Thy feverish couch, my love! and seems to sob
Amid the waving curtains as 't would tell
My heart how desolate it will become
When left in its lone widowhood to weep
And wail and agonize at Memory's tale.
The outward air is chill, but, oh, thy breast,
My dying love! is scorching with the fires
That centre in thy heart, and thy hot breath
Heaves sobbingly, like the sirocco gale
That heralds death; and thou art speechless now,
Save what thy glaring eyes can tell, for life
Is parting from thy bosom silently.
Thy pulse is wild and wandering, and thy limbs
Are writhing in convulsive agony,
And, while thy spirit hovers o'er the verge
Of Fate, thou canst not speak to me nor bid
Thy chosen one a long farewell! O Heaven!
Let thy sweet mercy wait upon his end
And life's last struggle close—'tis vain to hope
For life--then take his soul on gentle wing
Away, and let the sufferer rest with Thee!
Alas! hath He who rules the universe

Replied to my wild wish? oh, give me back
The spirit of my love for one brief hour—'tis o'er!
'Tis o'er! my love, my happiness, my hope.
I sit beside a corse! How deadly still
Is the lone chamber he hath left! The moan
Of dying nature, and the bursting sigh
Of a heart breaking, and the murmuring voice
Of a delirious spirit—all are hushed!
The eye that kindled love in my young heart
And told me I was blessed, is lustreless—
And those dear lips, that oft illumed my soul,
Are stiffening now; those features exquisite,
On which I often gazed as on a mirror
Beaming with beauty, genius, feeling—all
That love adores and honour sanctifies,
Collapse in their dread slumbers and assume
The ashen deadliness of soulless dust.
And must it be, my love! that thou wilt sleep
Where I can never watch thy wants and glide
Around, thy gentle minister? No more
Read voiceless wishes in thy pleading eye
And soothingly discharge them? Art thou gone.
Or is it but a dream? O thou dost dwell
Within my heart unchangeably as wont
And ever wilt!—I sit beside the Dead
Alone, while round me the false world is bent
On pleasure—on a shadow from the dust!
The bright blue wave of Hudson rolls below
My solitary view and sounds of joy
Fling music o'er its waters and the voice
Of gayety is rising on my ear,—
Like banquet mirth amid the pyramids.
O the full consciousness of utter loss!
The single wretchedness of cureless woe
While all around are gay! The chaos wild
Of billowy thought, on whose tumultuous tides
Hopes, powers and passions—all the elements

Of heart and soul in foamy whirlpools toss
 'Till whelmed in ruin!—Lovely babe! thou hast
 No father now, and where, my orphan'd child!
 Will close our wanderings? I have no home
 For thee, dove of the storm without an ark
 To bear thee o'er the waters of the Waste!
 Cold, voiceless mansion of my ruined love!
 I'll close thine eyes and kiss thy pallid lips.
 And watch beside thee for the livelong night—
 The last, last night I shall behold thy form!
 O agony, and they will bury thee!
 Will snatch thee from the pillow of my heart,
 And lay thee in the damp, unbreathing tomb!
 Sleep, my sweet child! thou knowest not the pain
 Of the sad bosom that thou slumberest on.
 It is some joy that thou feel'st not the loss
 Of him who would have worshipped his firstborn.
 The world is silent round me; pale the moon
 Gleams on the clay-shut eyes of him who loved
 Her gentle light in life, and o'er his cold,
 Collapsed, unchanging, melancholy face
 Plays her trapnsarent beam of love. My heart!
 Thy bleeding tears would drown my soul, if yet
 One being lived not in my life to tell
 How dear he was to me. Farewell, my love!
 Our slumbers now will be no more as wont!
 Yet e'en in paradise thou wilt behold
 Thine earthly love and bend from heaven to shed
 Immortal hopes o'er nature's funeral urn.

* * * * *
 * * * * *

Days, weeks and months passed o'er me and were seen
 Vanishing away with that pale, meek content
 Which doth exist against the spirit's will,
 So glad was I to feel that burden, Time,
 Dropping from my pierced heart; for I did live
 Among, but yet not with the living—tears

Suppressed within the fountains of the soul,
Congealed like waters in deep cavern-halls.
My being passed 'mid shadows, and the things
Familiar once assumed or unknown form
Or appendage unknown, and to my eye
The faces erst beloved appeared like those
Imagination images in dreams;
And oft I feared to speak, lest I should be
Abandoned to my woe; and, if I spake,
My voice re-echoed round me like the cries
Of shipwrecked mariners at night. My brain
Was fevered with my dreadful anguish, which
Grew by repression, like the *Rebel Flower*,*
Until it mastered reason, or whate'er
Name that observant faculty doth bear
Whose power is o'er the visible universe.
There was a dread, unmeasured, in my thought,
A vague idea of something horrible,
And I lived on like one in broken sleep,
Forever searching for some lost companion,
And wandering in mazes dark as doom,
Where the heart faints and fails, and hope expires.
Yet amid all the estranging of my love
I still clung to my child; a mother's heart
Retains its deep devotion to her dear
And pang-bought offspring, when the woman's mind
Is laid in ruins; and her bosom burns
With love instinctive for an innocent
And lovely creature whom her spirit knows
Only as something worthy to be loved.
Folding the orphan to my heart, I went
Abroad the mansion witlessly, and searched
Its chambers desolate, and then returned
In wildered disappointment that the thing
I looked for could no where be found.—I sat

* The Camomile.

In the lone winter nights before the dim
And melancholy embers, and did hush
My breath while listening for the tread of him
Who ever spent his evenings with his love
In social converse;—but he came not, so
I sighed and murmured to my prattling babe
That he would soon return; but then I thought
That he had gone to a far land and left
His duties to my care and faithful watch.
And so I oped his escritoir and saw
His papers, pens and pencils and all things
Disposed e'en as he left them, and I felt
That I could not arrange them otherwise
If they were wrong;—his closet then I searched
And there his vestments hung familiarly
And appositely arrayed.—I returned
From such short wanderings sad, and sometimes thought,
My love had told me he should dwell no more
Upon the earth—and then my heart did feel
As if it floated in a lava sea.
'Thus passed my strange existence from the day
He died until disease my infant laid
Upon his suffering couch, and I became
His sleepless watcher. Long I sat beside
The lovely one, attending all his wants
And sick caprices uncomplainingly,
Yet all unconscious that he was my son,
'Till one said he was dying—then there flashed
Through my dark spirit thoughts long dead, and tears
Quenched the dull fire that burned upon my brain,
And left my heart's fair path a desert way,
Calm though 'twas dreary. Life hath direful ills
And woes and sufferings, but the fiercest lie
In madness, e'er in dread of heaven and earth.
It cannot weep—it doth not think, and yet
It hath both tears and thoughts, the one of blood.

Of pangs the other; all its feelings coil
 Like serpents round the heart and sting the core
 Unceasingly, and all the sweet ideas
 Of love and friendship round the racked brain twine
 Like knotted adders, venomous and blind.
 Pierce, O 'Thou Holy One! the heart, but spare
 The spirit! Let thy judgments fall upon
 The affections, but preserve the immortal soul!

My child was spared me; and the tale I tell
 Was gathered from the loved ones who beheld
 But could not sooth my agony, and those
 Impressions I retain of sights and sounds
 That floated by me in bewilderment.

* * * * * *

It was the Sabbath's herald eve; and pained
 With melancholy musings, such as hearts
 Bleeding with sorrow nourish, forth I went
 To gaze on nature's pensive face and smile
 Of virgin softness, and I felt the sense
 Of her deep loveliness stealing o'er my woes
 While watching her pure countenance, now veil'd
 In moonlight and her changeful robes of green,
 Azure and silver blended, while she looked
 Like one who was to me what angels are
 To paradise—the living fount of joy.
 A diamond star was floating mid the waves
 Of pearl, that danced along the silver wake
 Of Dian's bark, and it did seem like love
 Adorning innocence; while in the midst
 Of ether hung the rosy isles of bliss,
 Where spirits, as they bear the hests of heaven
 And warder Zion's towers, lift up the songs
 That soaring souls forever sing above.
 The thought of meeting my beloved again,

Filled all my soul with gladness; for we part
But for a little season—a brief day,
From earth to heaven, and, like the evening star
Upon the azure verge of summer's sky,
The soul embraceth two eternities.

A sea of voices waked me from my dreams
Of holier spheres, and told me of the earth,
That held in its cold bosom all my loves,
Save one sweet babe, the image of its sire
Upon his lonely widow's heart! O Earth!
Cold is the couch thy sons must sleep upon,
And dark the chambers of their slumber deep.
I looked around me and the vestal moon
Was silvering the waters, o'er which scud,
Swanlike, full many a silent sail bound far,
Perchance, to fathomless eternity!
And dazzling lamps, that seemed in the pale moon
Like crime obtruding his unholy light
Before rose-beaming virtue, glared above
The blushing waters as they laughed in scorn.
And in a sea-dome, studded o'er with lights
That mocked the diamond, many a voice arose
In merriment well feigned, and many a form
Of outward splendour glided round to find
Something to tell how happy all must be
Who woo and win the pleasures of the world.
Like earth's gay hopes, full oft a column rose
Of fire far in the azure vault of night,
And then it burst and vanished! some did watch
The glittering fragments till they fell—then sighed—
And I sighed too—they told me of my joys!
It was no scene for me—the sights I saw
Were once shared with those eyes that wake no more;
The voices that I heard were all unknown;
The arm I held was not my wedded lord's!

'Tis bitter to compare our passing years!
'The Dead! where are they now? 'The Living! what
Are they to those whose hearts are in the tomb?

* * * * *

Slow I returned to my lone room, and kissed
My sleeping child, and looked to heaven—and wept.

THE DESERT HORSEMAN.

THE lightning glared, and the wild wind blew,
And the hurtling thunder broke,
And awfully black the storm-clouds grew
Beneath each wrathful stroke;
When the Warrior Chief of the wild wood sprung
On the Desert's coal-black steed—
Oh! fearfully then the dark skies rung
As they trump'd the awful deed!

The plumes of the eagle waved o'er his brow,
And his tomahawk glistened bright,
And his bended bow and his arrows now
Were ready for the fight;
The scalping-knife hung at his wampum belt
And his mantle loosely flowed—
Oh! who may tell what the Warrior felt
As thus with the winds he rode?

On, on to the desert!—Hegon's eye
'Mid the gloom like a meteor burned,
When the furnace fire of the midnight sky
To cavern darkness turned,
And his warwhoop pealed through the pathless wood
As he hurried madly on;
And the wild horse dashed through marsh and flood—
Oh! where hath the Chieftain gone?

Hark!—'tis the shout of the Indian band
That rises loud behind;
And the Warrior lifts his blood-red hand,
And hurries with the wind

* Founded on a tradition of the Oneida Indians.

Through the haunted glen and the trampled dell,
And the woodland plain of gore,
Where his Huron foes in the battle fell
A thousand years before.

And he vanisheth by the hallowed vale
Where his fathers' sepulchres lay,
And a thousand ghosts with whoop and wail
Do hurry him on his way,
While the lightnings flare and the thunders break,
And the dark gale howls along--
Yet the Chieftain's heart it doth not quake,
But he bears him high and strong.

On, on to the desert!--wildly bend
The moaning woods around,
And the thick ravines of the mountains send
A hollow deathlike sound;
And the beasts of the forest howl and cry
For the heart of the Indian Chief,
But the Segamore hurries quickly by
As the hurricane bears the leaf.

On the wild steed's back he stands upright,
And his warwhoop shrieks afar,
And he draws his bow with a monarch's might
At a light like a distant star;
And a wail arose in the morning there,
For an innocent child was dead,
And the arrow hung in its bosom fair--
But where had the murderer fled?

On the horse of the desert Hagon stood,
And the trees shrunk back as he passed,
While the black steed's hoofs through the lonely wood
Crashed louder than the blast;

And the serpent, coiled in his venom fold,
Sprang vainly from his den,
For far away over wood and wold,
The horse rushed through the glen.

And a thousand men had vainly striven
To stay that wild career—
With the arrowy bolts of the midnight heaven
Rode Hegan, void of fear;
And his tomahawk struck on the forest trees,
As he passed with terror by,
And the wild wood fell—and the morning breeze
Shook the sear leaves o'er the sky.

Thus the Prophet Chief in his terrors passed
To the hunting ground of souls,
Mid the lightning's glare and the tempest's blast.
Where, from their secret holes,
The moose and the deer start up and scud
Before the hunter's bow,
While his arrow drinks their red, red blood—
This Kichtan* doth bestow.

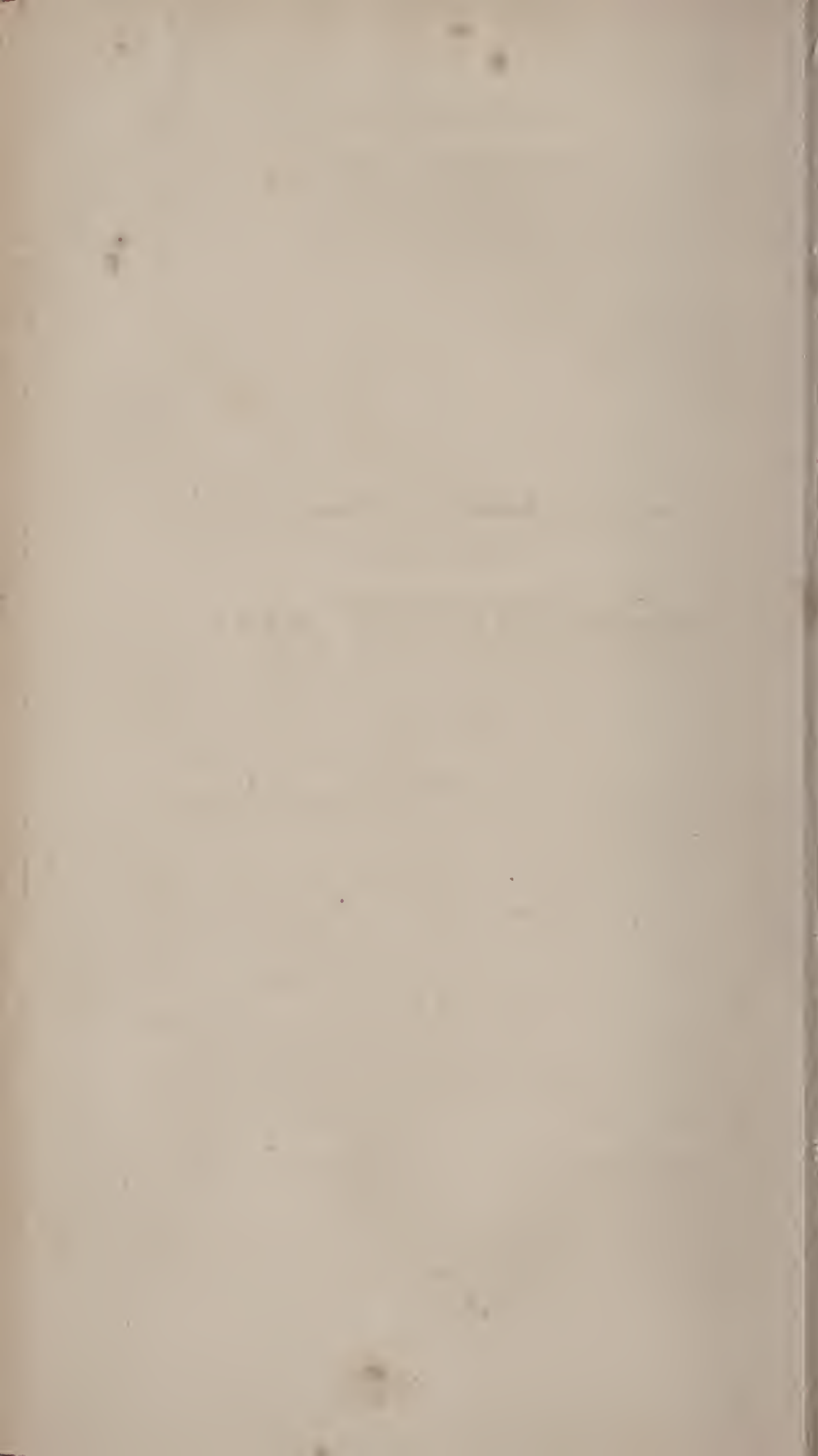
Thus Hegan passed in his war array,
On the coal-black steed of Death,
To the Land of Souls, where the warm clear day
Is Areouski's† breath.—
And far in the northern wood, at night,
The Oneida poets tell
How Hegan rode in his warrior might,
Where warriors only dwell.

* The god of hunting.

† The god of war.

THE SISTERS OF SAINT CLARA.

A TALE OF PORTUGAL.



TO THE
HON. EDWARD EVERET
IN TESTIMONY
OF THE HIGHEST RESPECT
FOR HIS ACCOMPLISHED TALENTS,
AND EMINENT ACQUIREMENTS,
THIS POEM
IS DEDICATED,
BY THE AUTHOR



THE SISTERS OF SAINT CLARA.

A TALE OF PORTUGAL.

CANTO I.

I.

'Tis the bridal of nature, the season of spring,
When Pleasure flits round on her diamond wing,
And the spirit plays brightly and softly and free,
Like gem-dropping beams on a boundless blue sea,
And the young heart is lit by the beams of love's eye,
Like an altar of perfume by fires of the sky.
'Tis the heart-blooming season of innocent love,
When the green growing mead and the whispering grove
And the musical stream as it purls o'er the dale,
And the flowers whose lips zephyr woos in the vale,
Are seen with the spirit of thrilling delight
As visions of beauty too passingly bright,
And heard like the songs that come o'er us in dreams
When the soul's magic light through infinity gleams.
The gay Earth is vested with verdure and flowers;
And Hope sings away the sweet sunny hours,
While bathing in sunbeams or over the sky
Her star-pinions waving through glories on high.
The citron groves throw on the wings of the breeze
Their balm-breathing flowers, and the green orange trees
Harp sweetly in airs from the hill and the sea,
Like lyres heard unseen singing joys yet to be.
O Eden of beauty! Lusitania! the sun
Loves to linger awhile, when his journey is done,
On the lofty twin Pillars, whose brows in the sky
Gleam bright when the sun-god rides flashingly by,
Which stand in their might 'mid the waves of the sea—
Abyla and Calpe—unconquered and free.

And Cintra's dark forests look smilingly on
Apollo descending from his chariot throne,
While Estrella's lagoon, green Escura receives
Sheen tints of his rays from the wood's gilded leaves
And Tajo's broad bay like a mirror reposes
'Tween a heaven of light and a garden of roses.

II.

'The sun's last beam of purple light
Blazons proud Calpe's castle height,
And over Lusitania's sea
Looks with a smile of melody.
'The volcan fires of Ætna glow
Brighter as sinks Hyperion low,
And, 'mid the gathering twilight, high
Stromboli flames against the sky,
O'er dark-blue ocean's billowy foam
'To light the wandering sailor home.
Child of the sun, the dusky Moor
Watches the horizon, bright obscure,
And, while the proud muezzin calls
Devotion's hour, from Ceuta's walls
'Throws his keen eye's far-searching glance
O'er the dark billows as they dance
Along the Mauritanian shore,
And listens to their surging roar
Around Abyla's basement deep,
Lest in tired nature's twilight sleep
'The foe upon his guard should steal,
And gain the pass ere trumpet peal.
Adverse, the gallant Briton's eye,
From Calpe's height, gleams o'er the sky
And marks with all a sailor's pride
'The vast sail gleaming o'er the tide,
While every breeze that comes from far
'Wafts music from red Trafalgar.

Evening's dim shadows o'er thee close,
Fair Lusitania! and the rose
Of morning blushes o'er thy plains
With the same rich and gorgeous light
As when his warlike, wild Alains,
O'er forest, flood and vale and height,
From Volga's banks Respedial led
'To 'Tajo's darkly wooded shore,
'Though where they warr'd or why they bled
None know or name forevermore.
And the sun rolls his last faint beam
O'er princely dome, rose-margined stream,
And almond grove and jasmine bower,
With the same smile as when the earth
Blushed in the beauty of her birth.

III.

The full orb'd moon is gleaming bright
On Cintra's dark and rocky height,
And on verandah, turret, tower,
Palace and fane at this still hour
Glow with a radiant smile of love,
And gilds the music-breathing grove
With those pure beams of light serene,
Which sanctify the peaceful scene.
From wave and dome and field and grove
Rise the soft notes of pleading love,
And many a strain is heard from far
Of wandering lover's sweet guitar,
And in the songs he fondly sings
His glowing heart finds rainbow wings,
Which bear his spirit's powers afar
Unto his being's guiding star.
Dian—the queen of sighs and tears,
Her richest robe of beauty wears,
And smiles to hear the vows that rise
Beyond her empire in the skies,

While still she weeps, in prescient pain,
'That passioned love is worse than vain.

IV.

St Clara's dark and massy pile,
Where sunbeams fall but never smile,
'Mid the dense cypress grove uprears
Its ivied turrets, gray with years,
And, where the shadowy moonlight falls,
Uplifts its blackened prison walls,
Within whose solitary cells
'Tearless despair for ever dwells,
And sin, beneath devotion's name,
Reposes in its sacred shame,
While deeds 'twould sear the tongue to tell
Are done in murder's fatal cell.

Within St Clara's cloistered gloom,
A living grave, a vital tomb,
Two lovely vestals, young and fair,
In misery dwelt and dark despair.
'Their loves and hopes and feelings chained,
Lone sorrow o'er their being reigned,
'Till hope arose upon their eye,
And love's ecstatic witchery
Woke the fond hearts that had been crushed.
And the soul's sunlight current gushed.
Like roses budding on one stem
Or blending hues of opal gem,
Lonely they sat within their cell,
Silent till expectation's swell
Burst o'er each thought and feeling high,
Like sunshowers from the azure sky.
Round them the full heart's stillness hung,
'Till Zulma's glowing feelings sprung
'To words that flowed like morning's beam,
Or song from lips of seraphim.

“ Sweet Inez! fast the fearful hour
“ When we shall spurn monastic power,
“ Doth hasten, and our spirits’ might
“ Must dare the ordeal of to-night.
“ The church’s power, our father’s ire,
“ And Heaven perchance, will all conspire
“ To cloud young love’s ascending sun;
“ Then, Inez, ’till the deed is done,
“ And we have passed their power’s extent,
“ Let not thy dovelike heart relent
“ Nor fancy picture punishment.”
“ Oh, lovely Zulma! hope is light
“ Within my trembling heart to-night,
“ And fain this bosom yet would prove
“ The silent joys of blissful love.
“ But, ah! my path in life hath been
“ So full of grief, and every scene
“ Of joy so soon hath changed to woe,
“ Life’s common bliss I ne’er shall know
“ Till my lone heart hath ceased to beat
“ Within the snow-white winding-sheet.”
On her pale cheek and blanching brow
Hope’s feverish hectic ceased to glow,
And o’er her bosom came the blight,
The darkness of perpetual night,
The gloom of days that long had vanished,
And thoughts, that never could be banished.

V.

Zulma’s high spirit at the view
Of peril more undaunted grew,
And glowed ’mid sorrow’s gathering gloom
Like angel faith above the tomb.
In danger’s hour she stood alone,
’Mid fearful things the fearless one,
And, as her sunlight spirit burned
O’er the deep darkness of despair,
The trembling fears of all she turned
To hopes and left them smiling there.

Her broad high brow, the throne of thought,
And features into spirit wrought;
Her starbeam eye, and face of light,
And moulded form that chained the sight,
And swanlike neck, and raven hair,
And swelling bosom, richly fair,
Which rose and sunk, like moonlight seas,
In its deep passion's ecstasies,
As if her mighty heart were swelling
In sun-waves for its heavenly dwelling;
All spake a spirit proud and high,
A wandering seraph of the sky,
And such was ZULMA; sorrow's night
Might its dark shadows o'er her cast,
But the deep gloom her spirit's light
Changed into rose-beams as it past;
She had one aim and none beside
Could bend her lofty lightning pride,
And, ere she drooped, she would have died.
Vemeira knew his daughter well,
And chained her spirit in a cell
Ere she could know the desolate
And hopeless woe of such a fate,
And 'twas to bless an elder child
He crushed that soul, so proud and wild.

VI.

Timid and fearful as the fawn,
That searches ere it treads the glade,
Yet lovely as a springtime dawn
In robes of rosy light arrayed;
Warm, feeling, soft and delicate
As the last blush of summer eve,
Yet trembling at the frown of Fate,
Lest, while her heart did sadly grieve,
Sin should assume the garb of woe,
And shroud in gloom devotion's glow;

INEZ, though fair as forms that rove
 Round Fancy's fondest dream of love,
 Was tender, gentle, fragile, frail,
 And shrinking as the violet pale
 Which blooms in solitary vale,
 By zephyr fanned and breathed alone,
 Unseen, unsought, unprized, unknown.
 Feelings suppressed and thoughts untold
 Flowed silently, like molten gold,
 O'er her fond heart, while virtue's sun
 Threw glory o'er them as they run.
 Her smiles and tears alike were born
 In purity of virgin love,
 And, like bright Eos, child of morn,
 She drank at streams that gush above;
 For sweetness such to her was given,
 Her faintest prayer was heard in heaven.

VII.

When Zulma heard her sister's plaint,
 And saw her gentle spirit sink,
 Her soul arose in power—"To faint
 " While standing on dark ruin's brink
 " Were madness worse than mirth in death;
 " When love and bliss our flight await
 " To quail, to droop despair beneath
 " Were folly that deserved the fate."
 " But if we fail"—"It cannot be!
 " Love, like the mountain breeze, is free,
 " And, amid peril, wrong and ill,
 " Strong as the gale that sweeps the hill,
 " Or severing ocean in its might,
 " Brings long-lost treasures into light."
 " But will beholding heaven approve
 " Our broken vows for earthly love?"
 " St Mary shrive thee! would'st thou be
 " A vestal in hypocrisy?

“Oh, gentle Inez, guard thy love!
“Count Dion’s daring quest would prove
“But folly’s dream in evil hour,
“If thou dost spurn the boy-god’s power.”
Inez arose, her blue eye flowed
In gushing tears of pearly light—
“Zulma! my heart were ill bestowed
“If Dion called me false to-night.”
“Vemeira’s daughter still!—O Heaven!
“Love’s messenger his call hath given!
“Inez! that rose, by Dion thrown,
“Lay on thy heart—it is thine own—
“And haste thee, for we must be gone!”
The soft strain of a sweet guitar
Now mellowed came as if from far,
But, skilful in its measured fall,
It rose by dark St Clara’s wall,
And, mastered by Prince Julian’s hand,
Its sweet notes flowed so richly bland,
They told unseen the minstrel lover,
And Zulma’s soaring spirit over
Threw breathless rapture as she fled
From her lone cell with footstep light,
While Inez’ heart, at every tread,
Spake like deep voices of the night.

VIII.

Queen of the skies! why should the beams
Of thy soft eye so richly glow
O’er scenes that darkest gloom beseems,
As fitting their soul-harrowing woe?
Why should thy smile alike illumine
Despair and Hope, and Love and Hate,
The bridal mansion and the tomb,
Hearts full of bliss and desolate?
Empress of Heaven! oh, thou wert made
For blooming hearts and tearless eyes,

To light the spirit's serenade,
And high soul'd love's fond ecstasies;
And, when young Time in Eden's bowers
Wore radiant crowns of fragrant flowers.
While Innocence with him would rove
In soothing shade of fair-leaved grove,
And love was bliss and truth its own
Blest guerdon in the morning's sight,
When angels looked from Glory's throne
And threw around her robes of light;
Ere woe was born of sin, and crime
Blotted from man's corrupted heart
The fairest name that youthful Time
Had written there with magic art;
Ere the sad hour man's father fell,
And o'er his fall rose shouts from hell,
'Thou, sky-throned Isis! from above,
Saw'st nought but pure unconscious love
Beneath the azure sky—whose sun
Smiled on each deed by mortals done.
Alas! thou now art doomed to gaze
Upon a world so dark and fell,
That thy most pure and lovely rays
Reveal man's heart—a living hell!

IX.

On the young vestals' desperate flight
Thou didst look down with smile as gay
As it had been their bridal night,
And they were led in fair array
O'er bright saloons and marbled halls;
And on ST CLARA's prison walls
Thy gleaming radiance shone as fair
As if delight were smiling there;
And on the lovely INEZ' eye
As she and Zulma fled in fear,
Thy rays were thrown from yon blue sky,
Unconscious that they lit a tear.

Crossing the cypress'd cemetry,
They hurried on with unheard tread
"Till they had gained the boundary
Of the lone empire of the Dead,
When, ere the signal could be given
To those who watched beyond the wall,
Inez stretched forth her hands to Heaven
Weeping as if the hour when all
Her hopes should die had come and spread
Its pall o'er life—and thus she said;—
"Now, ere we part, sweet Zulma, say
"Thou lov'st me as in childhood's day,
"When we together fondly strayed
"Through arbour'd groves and greenwood shade
"Plucked roses on the mead to crown
"The hours we loved to call our own,
"And felt that heaven looked smiling down
"When none beneath the laughing sky
"Were half so gay as thou and I.
"Tell me the bloom of life's young flowers
"Still lingers round thy changeless heart,
"And that the joy of happier hours
"Will never from thy soul depart!"
"*Now ere we part!* a strange prelude,
"Fair sister! to the heart's high bliss;
"Thy very spirit is imbued
"With doubts and fears—away with this!
"Thou art my sister! droop not now,
"Remember thine and Dion's vow!
"They hear our rustling in the shade—
"Here is the cord-wove escalade—
"Now, INEZ, fearless follow me,
"Doubt not, we must and shall be free."
Unfaltering ZULMA scaled the height,
Cheering the lovely nun to speed,
And then flew down with footstep light
To JULIAN's arms, most blest indeed.

The solitary vestal stood
 A moment ere she dared to climb,
 And in that moment's solitude
 Her stolen flight appeared like crime;
 She was so pure, so lovely, sin
 Tinged not a thought her soul within.
 But Dion hung upon the height,
 And step by step she climbed above,
 Her hand was stretched, in wild delight,
 To grasp that of her only love,
 When fancied guilt and dark despair
 Came o'er her as she lingered there,
 And her brain reeled in dizziness;
 She heeded not the cries below,
 She could nor see nor hear nor know
 The insupportable distress
 Of those who saw her form on high,
 Delirium in her swimming eye!
 One last shrill shriek of wild affright,
 The falling form that met his sight,
 The hollow groan, that rose and fell
 Upon his heart like ruin's knell,
 Told him his loves, joys, hopes had fled,
 And INEZ destined to the dead.

X.

"Away—away! Prince Julian, fly!
 "The alarum bell is pealing high,
 "And ruthless hordes of vestal fiends
 "Are rushing hither!"—Who ascends
 Again that dreadful wall, so late
 Scaled with a look that smiled at Fate?
 'Tis Zulma—"Julian! leave me now,
 "For I must share the death I wrought,
 "And consummate my vestal vow
 "In pain and darkness as I ought."

She rose to give her purpose deed,
When Dion barred her path and cried—
“ Prince Julian ! as thou wouldst in need,
“ And when despair hath humbled pride,
“ Crave mercy of the Power on high,
“ Seize Zulma quick and fly, fly, fly !”
In passion wild and wildered fear
The Prince obeyed the wise behest,
And grasped the heroic maiden ere
Her deed had left him thrice unblest,
And, ere a moment more had flown,
The high-soul'd nun and prince had gone.
Count Dion watched till they had fled,
Then sprung below among the dead,
Where headstones gleamed to mock the gloom,
The desolation of the tomb.
Gently he raised the unconscious nun,
And laid her bleeding on his breast,
Thus—even thus, a blessed one
To pillow such a form to rest;
While, as he gazed in speechless woe
On her soft, lovely features graven
With death's dark lines, he saw below
Nor love nor joy, nor hope in heaven.
But scarce the space of lightning's glare
Was left to muse of his despair,
Or soothe the suffering Inez there,
The cloister horde by Clotilde led,
Exulting that their holy hate
Could now be poured on beauty's head
And virtue's bosom desolate,
Rushed like hyæna troops upon
The gallant Dion—but, appalled
By his proud port, though all alone
He stood—they paused and shrilly called
The faggot priest, their alguazil,
To guard the holy cloister's weal.

Folding his bosom's dying bride
With one strong arm unto his breast,
And with the other waving wide
Iberia's sword that many a crest
Had cloven in the deadly fray,
He bade the throng yield ample way,
And sprung upon the ladder's height;
'Then came the alguazil, the light
Of hell was in his scowling eye,
Dashing the trembling host aside
Like warship rushing in its pride.
'The lover there that moment stood,
Not like a warrior trained in blood,
But like that Spirit who on high
His four-edged sword flashed o'er the sky,
And bade the sinning mortal die.
"Yield thee, blasphemer! Heaven commands!"
"Chain, then, the bold blasphemer's hands,
"And bind his madden'd spirit down
"Low as thy master's and thine own."
"Darest thou the monarch's alguazil?"
"Bid ye the whelp-robbed lion kneel!"
"Dark ruffian! thou wilt rue this hour."
"Ruffian!—not while my sword hath power."
And with the word the unfailing blade
Low at his feet the opposer laid,
And Dion seized the escalade.
He springs with more than mortal might,
He rises—almost gains the height—
His hand is on the moss-grown wall—
This moment saves or ruins all!
A word, a thought, a look, a dream
May ratify the doom of years;
One glance, one quick electric gleam
May lead unto an age of fears!
Oh, Dion, nerve thy heart again,
One minute,—spring—and thou art free,

O think—thy love—'tis vain—'tis vain,
 Despair hath sealed thy destiny!
 They tear away the cord-wove frame,
 And thou art doomed to woe and shame!
 Still Dion bears the double weight
 With one torn, bleeding, numbing hand
 Awhile—he falls—the scroll of Fate
 Hath rolled its darkest record! “Stand,
 “Exulting dæmons, stand ye there,
 “And o'er all earth your triumph yell,
 “And laugh o'er death and life's despair,
 “For than ye worse reign not in hell!”

* * * * *

XI.

'Tis joy to gaze, from the tall ship's lee,
 On the curling waves of the moonlight sea.
 When the mellow airs of springtime night
 Come over the heart as it floats in light,
 And the sleeping flowers exhale perfume,
 Like a virgin's breath from lips of bloom,
 And the dark-blue waters curl and gleam
 In the diamond star-light's mirrored beam,
 While the spirit burns o'er the glittering sea
 'Till it longs a moonlight wave to be.
 Oh, spirits that sail on the moonlight sea
 Should have thoughts as vast as eternity,
 And feelings as pure as the sleeping rose,
 When its leaves in the dew of the sunset close.

XII.

O'er Lusitania's soft-blue moonlight bay
 Swells the gay song of reckless gondolier,
 While his bark dances, as the waters play,
 On the shore waves that glitter bright and clear.

Dim in the distance, marked upon the sky,
Wave the blue pennon and the glimmering sail,
And oft is heard the master's anxious cry
While shoreward seaboy answers to his hail.

Yet, save his song and their expectant cries,
The world is slumbering in a soft repose,
And spirits from their star-thrones in the skies
Breathe softly as a dew-lipped sleeping rose.

It is the hour when Love's communion fills
Eye, lip and heart with rapture's magic light;
When waning Dian, throned on shadowy hills,
Smiles o'er young transports from her azure height.

Pomegranate, orange, lime and citron groves
Shadow gray turrets and time-honoured towers,
And heaven's pale queen amid their arbours roves
And counts with tears the melancholy hours.

But hushed is song of happy gondolier,
And fast the shadowy sail ascends on high;—
A step, a form, a voice—"Prince Julian's here!"
"Alfonso, haste! this hour we 'scape or die!"

XIII.

Before the rising, shrill-voiced gale
Flies the yard-stretching, mighty sail,
Swelling o'er broad Atlantic billow,
Like swan upon her wavy pillow,
Dashing aside from her high prow
The wave, whose hissing foam-wreaths glow
Like jewels thrown in floating snow,
And hurrying on her watery way,
Between two oceans, heaven and earth's,
Like war-horse through the battle fray,
Whose mighty heart would burst his girths

In its high swelling, should his lord
Or check his speed or sheathe his sword.
With a long sigh, as if from dream
Of pain and anguish slowly waking,
From Julian's breast, with sudden scream
Wild as her bleeding heart were breaking,
Zulma arose and gazed around
On ocean's sons, on wave and sky,
And then fell back and deeply groaned,
While gleamed through tears her eagle eye.
"Inez ! sweet Inez !" Shudderings came
Over her like the sansar's breath,
As from her heart flowed that sweet name
Which now was linked with woe and death,
And, wrapt in silent suffering,
She saw nor wave nor sky nor lover,
Nor heard the light-winged breezes sing,
Like nymphs in sea-shells, ocean over;
All—all to her was pain and gloom,
Her thoughts of what she left behind,
And o'er her angel sister's tomb
She heard the lonely wailing wind,
With spirit voice of wild distress,
Denouncing Inez' murderess!
Darkly with phantoms of her brain
Communing, o'er the billowy main
Zulma was hurried rapidly,
And the low murmuring of the sea
Seemed, when she heard the gulping surge,
Hymning the murdered vestal's dirge.

XIV.

The virgin huntress of the skies
With Ocean's daughters flies afar,
And Eos and her nymphs arise
Above the sun-god's throne, each star,

Orion's blazing sword of light,
And the twin-martyrs' glory bright,
And sea-born Beauty's radiance dimming,
While blue-zoned Tethys weaves a crown
Of pearls and corals brightly swimming
Through her vast empire fathoms down,
To deck Aurora's rosy brow
As her white steeds o'er ether fly,
And proud Hyperion, bright and slow,
Rolls unto heaven his glorious eye.
The bird of Jove his mighty wings
Waves o'er the crimson vault above,
And from his eye a radiance flings
Bright as the brightest glance of love.
The white plumed sea gull skims the sea,
The curlew sports around the bark,
And nature sings of liberty
And love as when from ancient ark
The beasts of earth and birds of heaven
To their bright fields and skies were given.

XV.

The rushing ship is sailing now
O'er the bright wave of Trafalgar,
And Morn is blushing o'er the brow
Of Algarve's dusky mountains far,
With the same smile of living bloom
As when to ocean's billowy tomb,
Amid the sea-fray's carnage red,
Their requiem shouts of victory,
Shrouded in glory, England's Dead
Sunk with unclosed, war-lightened eye,
Whose last, bright glance from gory wave
Saw England's banner proudly streaming
Victorious o'er their ocean grave,
And England's sword triumphal gleaming:

And o'er his sons, with every surge,
Bright, billowy ocean sings their dirge.
And now the swelling sail is fanned
By zephyrs o'er that narrow sea,
O'er which on either margin stand
Those giant mountain twins which he,
Alcmena's son, with godlike power
Severed and poured the sea between,
And which, since that rock-sundering hour,
The deadliest foes have ever been.
Thence onward holds the bark her way
Through the blue wave in fair array,
While to the northern view arise
The Appenines 'neath bending skies,
O'er whose snow-mantled summits erst
The Mauritanian hero led
His warlike host, by fate accursed,
To glory, as the warrior said,
And the proud spoils of mighty Rome;
In that soul-stirring hour of pride,
When his heart rolled in glory's tide,
Having dread Cannæ in his view
No more than he, whom Waterloo
Doom'd to the Rock-Isle's living tomb,
Had of that desolating fray
On Lodi's or Marengo's day.

Before the view, where sunbeams smile,
Rises that rocky mountain isle,
Where he was born, the mighty one,
Whose gory course of fame is run;
And where, perchance, a guiltless boy,
His fellows' chief, his mother's joy,
He wandered oft and played and smiled
Amid the mountain's shrubbery wild,
An innocent and happy child;

Undreaming of his pomp and power,
His crimes, disgrace and exile fate.
Ah! few can tell in childhood's hour
What thoughts and deeds their manhood wait:
Or who will bann or bless the name
That blazes on the scroll of Fame.
In him a mighty spirit burned,
But with a fierce volcano glare;
Oh, had that soaring spirit turned
To heaven and drank in glory there,
Earth would have bowed in rapture's mood
And held his name in sanctitude.
The Man, who guides a nation's way
To bloodless glory, o'er his name
Throws fairer wreaths of light than they
Who deck Earth's highest shrine of Fame.
But ah! he fell, and with him died
His empire, power and pomp and pride;
And nought remains of all he won—
Quenched is Napoleon's zenith sun.

Still onward fleet the ship careers,
Like rapid lapse of hurrying years,
While fades the bright foam of its wake,
Like all the joys we give or take,
And bears, with sail expanding high,
Its course, beneath a glorious sky,
Toward soft Campania's fairy land,
Where zephyrs sport with breathings bland
O'er ruins erst of pride and fame,
And gorgeous domes of deathless shame.
And, mid the night that robes the skies,
Julian directs sad Zulma's view
Where *Ætna's* fiery columns rise
In desolation's lurid hue,
Glaring between this world and heaven,
Like fiends to whom Destruction's given

The baleful light is flaring o'er
Trinacria's vine-clad, flowery shore,
Where Arethusa once gush'd forth
In lucid streams for bards to drink,
And Alpheus 'neath the sea and earth
Met his fair fountain bride—the brink
Bloomed like a garden of sweet flowers,
And, near, Ortygia's sacred grove
Delayed the rosy-footed hours
Of pure delight and raptured Love.
A weedy marsh now stagnates there,
And taints the thick and sluggish air,
As all man's hopes close in despair.
The lovers' course is almost done,
The lovers' goal is nearly won,
And how hath Zulma borne the flight?
Like one whose brightest day was night.
Like one whose heart hath caught a taint
Of crime, though fancied, dark and deep;
Whose dread remorse doth ever paint
Horrors, and ne'er is lulled to sleep,
Since o'er a spirit proud and high
It reigns with threefold energy.
Who backward looks and finds despair,
And forward, misery bars her there;
Who hath no hope on earth and none
Beneath high heaven's offended throne.
The more she thinks, the darker grows
The volume of her sins and woes;
No change comes o'er her agony;
Like Ætna's fire, it burns within,
And, darkning o'er the spirit's sky,
Burns ever with the gathering sin.
It was not madness; o'er her brain
Coherent thoughts ceased not to flow;
But 'twas that dread, oppressive pain,
That mountain weight of crushing woe,

Which follows, in a sinless mind,
 A deed that spirits too refined
 Brood into guilt—for priestcraft e'er
 Riots in human woe and fear.
 Reason was worse than vain, and speech
 The dreadful mania could not reach,
 That o'er her burning spirit shed
 The baneful death-dew of despair,
 The upas of a bosom dead
 To all of beautiful and fair;
 For Zulma sought no sympathy,
 No comfort faithless as 't is free,
 But leaned upon the penal rod
 And bowed her burning heart to God.

XVII.

The barque hath passed the Tyrrhine sea
 And anchored in the glorious bay
 Of proud and base Parthenope,*
 Where perfumed gales with sunlight play
 O'er antique temple, giant tower,
 And palace proud, whose mirrored dome,
 Like a bright heaven, o'er many a tomb
 Of many a mighty one laid low
 Gleams with a rich, refulgent glow,
 Like Freedom o'er lost Power.
 The barque is moored—the lovers gone
 Beyond the once fair Lucrine lake,
 Where dark-browed Ruin reigns alone
 O'er Baiæ lost in marshy brake;
 And all the fairy gardens, groves,
 Meadows and dales erst loved so well
 By him† (so reckless luxury proves
 In one a nation's ruin fell)
 Who shunning Glory's shrine when he

* Neapolis or Naples.

† Lucullus.

Had gained the fane, left mighty Rome
 The victim of fierce anarchy,
 Dreading yet hurrying on her doom.
 Lucrine—the haunt of mirth is gone,
 And there volcanoes glare alone!
 Baiæ hath sunk to dust, and she,
 Earth's mistress stands, like ancestry,
 Scowling o'er sons whose highest boast
 Had been their fathers' deepest shame,
 To pride, to truth, to glory lost,
 To honest hearts and patriot fame.

XVII.

Days, weeks and months have been and gone,
 And lovely Zulma dwells alone
 In solitary castle high
 Between fair earth and fairer sky.
 Julian had been, all lovers are,
 Had knelt and sworn his deathless love,
 And, like a sky-throned, radiant star,
 Thrown light and beauty from above;
 He had been all that being is,
 Whom kingdoms wait—I dare not dwell
 On man's *intent* to offer bliss
 To one who had for him farewell
 Bidden all thoughts of earth and heaven,
 And sole to him her full heart given.
 Prince Julian was Campania's heir,
 And thus decreed his royal sire;—
 "Thou wed'st proud Austria's daughter fair,
 "Or never com'st the sceptre nigher."
 Julian was proud of pomp and fame—
 The fair nun could nor trump his name
 Nor plume his power—but she might be
 The unseen queen of sovereignty,
 The empress of his private hours—
 The angel of his palace bowers.
 So Julian thought, though he had tried

Her honest fame by speech oblique
 And look lascivious, when his pride
 And birth and state appeared most weak
 Before wrong'd Zulma's Juno eye,
 Whose glance spake pride and purity.
 From day to day he talked of love,
 While Zulma would not see his aim,
 Save when the princely sophist strove
 To prove all rites a needless name;
 Then flashed her eye and glowed her brow,
 Like sunbeams o'er the mountain snow.
 On love I will not moralize;
 It hath more wiles and snares than sighs:
 Sooth be the Tale and fair I tell—
 His deeds are man's true chronicle.

XVIII.

'Twas soft Campania's evening hour,
 And earth and heaven were seas of light,
 And Zulma in her rose-wove bower
 Sate gazing on the horizon bright,
 Where white clouds float and turn to gold
 In many a bright and glorious fold,
 And fancy pictures angel pinions
 Far waving o'er those high dominions.
 'Till, as she thought of pleasures gone,
 And Inez, tortured, dying, dead,
 And her own misery there alone,
 Her hopes destroyed, her true loves fled,
 Her bleeding heart left desolate,
 And all the ills and woes of fate,
 She seized her harp and mournfully
 Sung of those joys no more to be.

THE BANKS OF ZEVERE.

The bright Sun is sinking o'er Italy's sea,
 And kissing Campania's fair gardens of flowers.

But, oh, his smile brings no pleasure to me,
For my heart ever grieveth o'er childhood's sweet hours.
Sweetly gay rise the notes of the lover's guitar,
As he greets his heart's bride in the valley cot near
But, ah, all my songs of delight are afar,
Like a spirit's voice heard on the banks of Zeveré.

How oft have I sat with sweet Inez upon
Those rose-cushioned banks in our being's gay hours.
And fancied delights ever new to be won
In the great World of beauty and music and flowers
How oft, O thou dear one! I slumbered with thee
In our moonlighted bower in the spring of the year
And heard the birds singing on our apricot tree
When we 'woke to delight on the banks of Zeveré.

How often when nature in vain bloomed around
I turned in my heart-stricken sorrow to thee,
And in vigil and penance and weariness found
Thy sweet love a solace and treasure to me!
But, alas! thou art dead, and I am alone,
Far from all that on earth or in heaven were dear:
Fare thee well, lovely Inez! dark shadows are thrown
O'er our bower on the banks of the lonely Zeveré.

Julian had stood beside the bower,
And heard, unseen, the mournful song,
While every blushing, dewy flower
Reproached him with fair Zulma's wrong:
But nature's voice, so soft, so still,
Fails to o'er-rule ambition's pride,
Or with atoning sorrow fill
A lordly heart unsanctified.
Julian drew near and greeted fair
The sad, forsaken, lovely maid,
And, eloquent in praise and prayer,
Rehearsing all he oft had said,
Implored compliance with his love,

Acceptance of his treasures—all—
And she should ever—ever prove
The queen of banquet, bower and hall,
And be his heart's eternal bride,
His life, his sun, his hope, his heaven,
And, when he gained his throne of pride,
His royal name should soon be given.
But, while the Prince besought and prayed,
How sat and looked the insulted maid?
Like her of Enna's rosy vale
When wooed by him of Acheron;
Her marble brow, her cheek so pale,
Her tearful eye—all brightly shone
With pride and shame, disdain and scorn.
And thus—"Why was I ever born
"So to be scoffed at?" quick began
The nun, while fierce her hot blood ran,
And her small form, dilating, grew
Like towering angel on the view.
"Prince Julian, cease! I charge thee, cease!
"Are these thy notes of love and peace?
"Art *thou* to be a nation's king?
"THOU—false, deluding, faithless thing!
"The thoughts, that lightened spirits high
"In the old days of chivalry,
"Throw not a wandering gleam o'er thee
"Thou craven knight of loselry!
"Vemeira is a noble name,
"And it can never be that fame
"Should Zulma's memory link with shame,
"Shall I thy leman be? O no!
"Never while I can wield a blow,
"While poison drops or waters flow.
"Rede thou a woman's spirit well
"Ere mock her thus with words from hell.
"And know that virtue is her heaven,
"To things like thee, oh, never given!

* * * * *

"O Julian, Julian! love like mine
 "Is quenchless, deathless, for 'tis pure;
 "E'en now it doth around thee twine
 "Fondly and cannot but endure
 "The same as when thine eye first shone
 "O'er the same mirror as my own.
 "Hadst thou been what I thought thee erst.
 "As knightly as thou wert at first,
 "Though doomed to groan in poverty,
 "'Mid malice, misery, wrong and ill,
 "The slave of fear—a lord to me—
 "I would have loved—obeyed thee still.
 "And, with unsorrowing brow and eye,
 "Forsaken not and unforsaking,
 "When sleeping, kissed thy misery
 "Away, and sung to thee when waking,
 "But these are dreams of passion yet
 "Surviving when its hope hath set;
 "Vain mockeries of my bosom's sun
 "Quenched ere his journey hath begun!
 "I leave thee, Julian! and be thou
 "Thy own just judge—no worse! and now—
 "There are thy gifts!"—From neck of snow
 Her carcanet—and then her zone
 Of jewels and her chains and rings
 She loosed and threw, disdainful, down;
 "There, Julian, take the gilded things,
 "For which thou thoughtst that I would sell
 "My honour—and now fare thee well!"

XIX.

Bewildered, lost in guilt and shame
 And torrent passions wildly warring;
 Defied, despised in deed and name,

Each wildfire thought another marring;
Prince Julian stood unmoving where,
In all the grandeur of despair,
Zulma, like empress throned in power
More than deserted nun, had left
Her lover in that sundering hour
When her proud heart of hope was reft.
Zulma had hurried from his view—
Her form of love, her voice, her smile
No more enchantment o'er him threw—
No more his sorrows could beguile;
She had been his—and now was not—
He had been hers in grief and woe—
Now she had gone—to be forgot—
And he was left alone to—"No!"
"By Heaven! it cannot, shall not be!"
"Crown, sceptre, kingdom—what are ye
"To love and love's true paradisè?
"The earth preferred unto the skies!
"Ambrose!"—"My Lord!"—"Caparison
"The fleetest steed in all my stalls,
"And bring the courser here anon—
"And guard thou well the castle walls!
"I will the maid regain or die,
"For Honour is man's majesty!"
He vaulted on his gallant steed,
And vanished in the forest dun,
Then rose the hill and o'er the mead
Rushed 'neath the last beam of the sun.

THE SISTERS OF SAINT CLARA.

CANTO II.

I.

O Land of my birth! Thou fair World of the West!
With freedom and glory and happiness blest!
Thou nation upspringing from forest and grove,
Like wisdom's armed queen from the brain of high Jove!
Though thy winds are the coldest the North ever blows,
And thy mountains the drearest when covered with
 snows;
Tho' the warm fount of feeling is chilled while it gushes,
And pleasure's stream frozen as brightly it rushes;
Tho' thy sons, like their clime, are oft chilling and rude
And rough as the oak in their own mountain wood;
Yet I love thee, my country! as fondly as Tell
Loved the Alpine Republic he rescued so well.
For thy yeomen can circle the winter-eve hearth,
Undreading oppression, and talk of the Earth,
Whose bosom yields nurture to father and son,
Leaving hearts pure and gay when the glad work is done:
While the pæans they shout over glories by-gone
Are echoed by virtues for ever their own.
O thou home of the rover o'er ocean's rude wave,
Asylum of sorrow and fort of the brave!
Advance in thy Glory o'er forest and sea,
Unrivalled, unconquered, heroic and free!
Though the rose bloom and fade in its holiday hour,
And the sun-god is palled in his glory of power,
Tho' winter's cold breath blanch the blossoming rose,
Unlike the bright clime where the sky ever glows,
Yet thy virtues bend not to each soothing breeze,
Whose syren song lures through the soft shading trees.

Like the gay, grovelling sons of the tropical clime,
Whose skies are all glory—whose earth is all crime.
None love thee so well as thy sons far away,
None bless thee more oft than the bard of this lay.

II.

The sunniest rose that ever blowed
In velvet vale of soft Cashmere;
The loveliest light that ever glowed
O'er heaven in springtime of the year,
Ne'er blushed and beamed more purely bright
Than gentle Inez' sinless heart
Upon that dread unholy night
When doomed with all it loved to part.
No spirit, gazing from above
With eyes impearled in pity's tears,
Cherished more heavenly thoughts of love
In glory's highest, brightest spheres,
Than that pure-child of love and light,
Dragged, 'neath the covert of the night,
To the dim arch'd refectory;
Where, telling fast their rosaries,
And lifting many a saintlike eye
To heaven with muttered moans and sighs,
The demon conclave met to doom
To living grave, to breathing tomb,
The apostate, suffering, dying nun.
The word hath passed—the deed is done!
Ere morn gleams through the pictured glass
Of prison cell, or o'er the wall
Of dark St Clara light doth pass
Dimly and thick and sickening, all
Of that dark bigot band, save one,
Are kneeling at the tapered shrine,
Before the Omniscient's holy throne,
Where every thought should be divine,

To chant their impious prayers to Him,
In whose creation searching eye
Not even the heavenliest seraphim
Are pure in their great piety!
Alas! that Heaven's most blessed boon,
Religion, breathing peace and love,
In man's polluted heart so soon
The veriest creed of hell should prove!

III.

Unseen, unfelt, unknown, her fate
O'er the fair vestal's head had past,
And she was left all desolate—
The doom was sealed—the die was cast—
Ere, waking from her dreadful dream,
She faintly said—"I heard a scream
"Of death, methought, O Dion! say
"Is Zulma safe?" Then, as she lay
Leaning against the dungeon wall,
She turned--groaned--and fell back again:
"Oh, Dion! love! oh, tell me all,
"Where--where is Zulma?"--Awful pain
Came o'er her then and dimmed the eye
Of yesternight's dread memory,
And through her spirit's drear opaque
She could not look--she could not take
Perception of her agony;
She knew 't was so--but how or why
It baffled her delirious brain
To tell;--and then she thought again,
And more distinct her memory grew
Of what had passed--and chill the dew
Of death hung on her writhen brow,
Where love still shed its parting glow,
As dim she caught the past and gone;
Yet she could not--the dying one,
Think why she thus was left alone.

She spake again, but faint and low—
“O Dion! thou hast often said
“Thy love could master every woe,
“And o’er all griefs its radiance shed;
“It cannot be that thou shouldst now
“Forsake thy love, forget thy vow—
“Now, when I feel—O Dion, come
“And bear me hence—I must go home!”
She listened then for some faint sound,
And strove to rise and look around;
But all was midnight gloom and she
Alone there in her agony.
Still memory gathered link by link—
And still life’s current quickly bled—
With a death-thirst she longed to drink
What flowed around her dungeon bed;
She scooped the fluid in her hand,
And bore it to her lips—’t was blood!
And then her spirit lost command
’Mid horror, gloom, and solitude,
While thought, no words of man can tell,
O’er all the past began to swell,
And well she saw her hopeless doom,
There buried in eternal gloom,
Whence shrillest shriek and wildest cry
Could never reach the shuddering sky.
No missal there nor cross had she,
O’er which to breathe her parting breath;
To cheer her in her misery,
And change to bliss the pangs of death;
For they had banned the dying nun
And barred redeeming penitence!
Demons! their hate her glory won—
Her amulet was innocence!
So malice works its own reward,
And weakest proves when most on guard,

For never yet hath hatred wrought
The deadly ruin which it sought,
Untended by a deadlier blow
Than that which laid its victim low.

IV.

A sound disturbed her solitude—
High chanting from the chapelry;
Like wailings from a gloomy wood
When echoed by a stormy sky,
The distant swell of cloister strain
And matin hymn came o'er her brain,
And roused to life her slumbering pain;
It was her dirge—that morning song,
And slowly rolled the notes along
The cypress groves—the vaults—the cells—
Like murder's midnight groan which tells
The fearful deed most fearfully;
And there the lovely Inez lay
In suffering's last extremity,
While not a solitary ray
Of light relieved the heart-felt gloom
That palled her spirit in the tomb.
It was a mockery of her woe—
The mass of hell yelled out below—
That pæan, like a death-doom sent
Through farthest vault—through deepest cell,
To agonize the punishment
Of the fair one Heaven loved so well.
But oh, no fiend with things can cope
Whom God hath left to their own will—
Giv'n o'er beyond all reach of hope,
At hate's hell-cup to drink their fill;
The deadliest demon, banned the most,
May fill the archangel's holiest throne
Ere mortal once—forever lost,
Can for his damning deeds atone.

The light of heaven may beam o'er hell
Dimly and touch the apostate there;
But man, abandoned, bids farewell
To hope, and weds his own despair.

V.

Another sound the stillness broke,
And Inez' bleeding heart awoke.
It was the wailing of a dove,
The death-song of a simple bird
O'er her who died for heaven and love,
And gladly were the soft notes heard.
Perched on a cypress o'er her cell,
The bird hailed not the glorious sun,
But sadly sung the last farewell
Of the pure, sweet, expiring nun,
To earth and earthly sins and woes
And life so early in its close.
As Inez listened to the strain,
And longed to waft it back again,
The shade of death was in her eye,
The pulses of her being beat
Faintly and death's last agony
Came o'er her like a shadowy bloom,
A soft voice stealing from the tomb,
A light to guide the parting spirit
Beyond the woes that all inherit.
Feebly she sunk—the crimson tide
Gushed forth no more—her heart was still;
Yet her lips trembled as she died—
“Dion—forgive—my wrongs!” And 'till
Her features sunk collapsed in death
That name was breathed with every breath.

VI.

A taper gleams amid the gloom—
A white-robed form approaches near—

It pauses by the dungeon tomb,
And listens tensely as in fear,
Or hope--and now it moves again
And lifts the iron-bolted grate,
And gazes o'er the cell of Pain,
Doubting its lovely tenant's fate.
Demon! go in--thy victim's gone!
Unseen, unheard, like guilt alone;
Clotilde doth listen there awhile,
And then descends--and with a smile
Deadly and dark moves round the corse,
Whose features are an Angel's still.
"Dead?--Ay, 'tis well--it had been worse
"Had justice half fulfilled my will
"Or hadst thou lived till now!"--She turned
The lovely vestal's body o'er,
And laughed aloud; and then she spurned
The corse upon its gory floor,
And smiled as if she gave it pain;
And then she raised the beauteous nun--
"Ay, 'tis a blessed fate, sweet one!
"That thou hast wrought thyself--again
"Thou wouldst not do the deed!" She threw
The pale, cold corse in scorn away,
And yet more dark her features grew,
As death had robbed her of her prey;
And still she stood, with fiendlike eye,
Revelling in hatred's demon feast,
And with low curse and muttered cry
Banning e'en Him who had released
The vestal from her deadly power
And raised the soul to Eden's bower,
When a loud crash rose high--and far
The echo as of bolt and bar
Shooting, went forth!--Where art thou now,
Proud Abbess? Ah! thou soon wilt know!
The iron portal to the cell,

The lifted grate had fallen—how
It nought avails for me to tell;
Perchance, the wind had laid it low,
Or death-winged angel might have thrown
The dreadful bars in anger down,
Eternal justice to dispense
To suffering, murdered innocence.
Howe'er it was--proud Clotilde there
Was doomed to perish with the dead,
In silence, darkness and despair,
And meet the fate her sentence said.
There could be no relief--no, none--
She had gone forth, unseen, alone,
And from that subterranean cell
No cry arose to human ear;
It was a dark monastic hell,
Beyond hope's sun-illuminated sphere.
She shook the bars—but they were fast--
She shrieked--but echo mocked her pain;
She gazed around—but shadows past
Like fiends and she sunk down again.
And then remorse was leagued with fear,
And both like vipers gnawed her heart;
And horrid sounds were in her ear
That cried--“What dost thou here? depart!
“Seek thou the hell of thy dark creed,
“Thine be the doom thou hast assigned,
“The unpitying bigot's bitter meed,
“The quenchless ruins of the mind!
“Depart! depart!” how awful e'er
Is guilt when phrenzied by its fear!

VII.

Unshrived, she there must die in all
Her unforgiven guilt and woe;

On either side a dungeon wall,
And wrath above and death below,
Unsoothed, unpitied and alone,
Without a single orison,
Without a tear to mourn her fate,
Or look of grief compassionate,
Or holy rite or orris pall
Or requiem chanted forth by all
The holy vestal sisterhood,
Who round her erst admiring stood
As if St Marie had been given
To them in other form from heaven.
But--such be guilt's dark fate for e'er!
She there must perish dust to dust,
Unshriven in the dungeon drear,
Accursed below--among the just
All entrance barred eternally!
Now guilt forestalled redemption's hours,
And madness sprung from agony!
Darkly the storm of misery lowers,
And darker yet it soon shall be;
For Sin uprears her giant form
And mad Remorse, the spectre, stands,
Gashed by the fangs of guilt's dark worm,
Lifting on high his gory hands
To warn too late--to tell at last
The victim that her day hath past.
And yet more awful thoughts arise,
More fearful shadows blast her view,
And wilder are her echoed cries,
And colder is the dungeon-dew.

VIII.

Time flies--strength fails--but madness grows
Stronger and darker in its mood,
And severed Fear delirious throws
O'er all the gloom a robe of blood;

And now she sinks beside the nun,
There like a song-lulled angel sleeping,
And smiling as her woes were done,
And she in Heaven were vigils keeping.
She starts as if an adder stung!
A demon voice of mirth had rung
Through all the chambers of her brain;
She listens—now it comes again,
Blended with laughter wild and rude,
And echoes through the fatal cell,
And cries aloud—"Thy soul's imbued
"With blood of innocence;—'tis well
"That on thy victim's lifeless breast
"Thou shouldst sink in eternal rest!"
Her maniac heart could bear no more,
The last extremity had come;
She grovelled on the cold earth floor
In speechless anguish at her doom;
Gazed with a madden'd eye, that told
What horrors o'er her bosom rolled,
Upon the nun who slept as still
As infant that has drank its fill;
Then with a shriek that might appal
The fiend, against the dungeon wall
Dashed headlong—groaned and died!—'Tis past,
The more than mortal suffering.
Alas! I would it were the last!
But earthly minstrel dare not sing
Of fates beyond the farthest ken
Of starry-eyed philosophy;
Among the abodes of mortal men
He finds enough of misery
To break the heart and rack the brain
That feels or thinks of human pain.
Her fate hath past—her soul hath fled—
And peace attend the voiceless Dead!

IX.

Life scarce had parted and her fate
Passed o'er the haughty Abbess there,
Ere steps approached the iron grate,
And voices, as in last despair,
Echoed above the fatal cell.—
The portal's raised and they descend,
The sisterhood.—Now note ye well,
Fair vestals! ere ye ween to wend
In sin's broad path, sin's woful end!
The highest bliss of heaven may prove
The bitterest dreg in misery's cup,
And spirits born of heaven and love
By guilt be lost and given up
To state abhorring and abhorred—
And not adoring and adored!
Long was the anxious search and quest
Ere they could trace their Abbess there,
And anguish searched full many a breast
As they stood gazing in despair
On murdered and on murderess.
I pause not now to paint the scene—
The natural ill's of life suffice
To fill with tears the sternest eyes,
When thought retraces what hath been,
To gloom the heart and cloud the way
That shone so brightly yesterday.
Together from the dungeon cell
The corses were in silence borne,
While lingering tolled the funeral knell,
And sullen echoes moaned forlorn;
And shrouded in their vestments white,
They laid them side by side, and kept
Their vigils through the livelong night,
While breathlessly the dead ones slept
As softly as two infants, born
Perchance, to be each others' scorn!

The wakeful sisters watched alone,
And many a holy rite was done
To foil the fiend and save the soul
Of her who once held high control
O'er penance stern and vow austere,
For many a long and sinful year.
The lovely innocent, that there
Too holy was for grief or prayer,
Lay like a picture of the blest,—
'Twas her last hour and loveliest!
They watched—they prayed—night waned and morn,
Like holy hope in Eden born,
Blushed the stained glass and casements through,
And gave the gloomy scene to view.

X.

To die—to feel the spirit fainting
In the mansions of the breast,
While yet the vivid eye is painting
Life and vigour unpossessed;
To see the mortal frame decaying,
The temple's pillars breaking down,
And know the soul will soon be straying
Over climes and realms unknown;
While warm affection hovers o'er
The couch of death, with wailing prayer
Imploring lengthened life once more
In all the anguish of despair;
And we behold and feel and know
All that is felt for us and yet
Beside perceive the overthrow
Of hopes on which the heart is set;
And picture in our dying hour
Anguish unknown till we are dead,
And conscious, hopeless misery's power,
And tears from being's fountains shed—

Oh, 'tis a time, an hour of gloom
Worse than the midnight of the tomb!
But, ah, 't is worse to think that we,
The proud, high, sentient lords of earth,
Must moulder into dust and be
Or clay or nothing! At our birth
It was decreed that we should die,
But not that we should rotting lie
With every foul and loathsome thing
Blending our ashes.—Fling, oh, fling
My corse in ocean's booming wave,
Or burn it on the funeral pyre,
But lay it not in reeking grave
To glimmer with corruption's fire!
St Clara's funeral bell is knelling
With the solemn voice of death,
And far the mournful notes are swelling,
While from postern far beneath
Issue the white-robed virgin train,
Chanting low the requiem strain,
Over the dark and dismal tomb
Of one in being's roseate bloom,
And one in sallow withered age,
Departed from life's tragic stage.
Where sorrow never wakes to weep,
And ill and wrong distract no more,
And homeless wanderers sweetly sleep,
And hate and pride and pain are o'er,
They lay the vestals finally.
Above them waves a cypress tree,
Intwined with briar and rosemary,
And round them sleep the mighty dead,
Who centuries since forever fled;
A silent nation gone—alas!
Where living thought can never pass.
The ceremonial pomp is past—
The vestals vanish, one by one—

The holy Father is the last,
And even he hath slowly gone.
And stillness reigns o'er all the scene,
That is so peaceful and serene;
A stillness greatly eloquent
When pious spirits bow and feel
Delicious melancholy, sent
From heaven o'er all their being steal
With purifying breathings mild;
And they become like little child
Gentle and docile, purely good,
In their communing solitude,
And look from earth to heaven with eye
Of sage reflecting piety,
Comparing man's allotment here
With glories of a brighter sphere.

XI.

O Love! the holiest name in heaven,
The purest, sweetest thing below!
Why are thy joys to torture given?
Thy raptures unto wailing woe?
Why should thy fondest votaries prove
Faithful even unto death in vain?
Or why, despite thy vows, O Love!
Should all thy blisses close in pain?

No voice was heard—no form was seen
Within the churchyard's lonely bound,
And Dion, from his weedy screen,
Rose mournfully and gazed around.
Long had he watched each lone—lone hour
For some faint note of joy or grief,
'Till Destiny's most dreaded power
To him had almost been relief.
But nought allayed his dread suspense
'Till Inez and her murderess

Were borne to that lone mansion whence
No tenant ever found egress.
Then flashed the whole revealment dire
O'er Dion's burning heart and brain,
And death became a wild desire,
A refuge from his penal pain.
With rolling eye, and brow of gloom,
And pallid cheek and trembling tread,
Dion approached the robbing tomb
Where Inez slept among the Dead,
And bowed his throbbing head upon
The dark funereal tablet stone
Despairingly, while forth his tears
Unbidden gushed.—“In youthful years
“I little recked of fate like this;
“I thought the world was full of bliss
“And man most blessed in life—Alas!
“I am not now the thing I was;
“And nought remains for me to dare
“But misery, madness and despair;
“The darkness of a breast that bleeds
“O'er the wild thought of damning deeds,
“The doom that never will depart
“From the dim mansions of the heart.”
He drew his poniard, looked on high
For the last time with gleaming eye,
Then laid him down the grave beside
And clove his heart! The purple tide
Gushed like a torrent and—he died!
The last glance of his spirit turning
To her for whom his heart was burning.

XII.

The autumnal sun's rich evening beams
Blush o'er Cantabria's billowy sea,
And Lusian fields and groves and streams,
Like angel smiles, celestially;

And clustering vines hang purpling o'er
The shrubbery mantled palisade,
And golden orange, cypress hoar,
And cork tree rough, and yew, whose shade
The dead alone doth canopy,
And sunken glen and dim defile,
Alike in nature's bounties free,
Return the soul-inspiring smile
Of Autumn—queen-muse of the heart!
And as soft evening's hues depart,
Like holy hopes that smile in death,
And twilight robes the fading sky
With beauty felt, not seen—beneath
The spreading palm, the lover's eye
Burns as he tunes his soft guitar,
And sees his own dear maid afar,
Approaching her rose-woven bower
To solemnize love's sacred hour.
And lordly prince and shepherd hind,
And lady proud and simple maid
Enjoy alike the season kind,
When flowers grow lovelier as they fade.
Eve shadows dim the varied scene,
And the calm sunlight wanes away,
While one lone cloud of lustre sheen
Still wears the rays of parting day,
And hangs upon the zenith sky,
Like hope the sad heart lingering by.

XIII.

Looming in shadowy twilight o'er
Tajo's broad bay afar is seen,
Scudding toward the Lusian shore,
A quick, unladen brigantine;
And now it grows upon the eye,
White sail, dark hulk, and swanlike prow;

L

And swells upon the evening sky
Like castle turretted with snow;
And full the rushing wake is heard,
Blent with command's shrill-uttered word,
And many a heart throbs fondly now
To meet its loves and find its home,
As the light vessel crinckles slow
The waters which no longer foam.
The brigantine is moored—the crew
Are busy, boisterous, glad and gay,
And jovial crowds are there;—but who
Through the dense throng makes rapid way
With look so proudly desolate?
'Tis ZULMA, who hath borne her fate
And yet will bear 'till being's close,
All she hath lost and still can lose,
With an unshrinking spirit none
Can tame or crush;—she is alone
In desolation—but she bears
Her lofty brow unblanched, and throws
Around an eye undimmed by tears,
And, as she hurries on, she grows
Stronger, as if her spirit stood
Prepared for woe of all degree,
And agony and solitude,
And horror, and deep misery.
With hurried step though tearless eye,
She came, where still the massy towers
Of her own convent rose before her
And cast time's deepened shadows o'er her.
From many a tongue too soon she heard
The fatal story of the past,
Told too with many a needless word,
That fell like Lybia's desert blast.
Zulma shrieked not, but fiercely rolled
O'er brain and heart the worst—the last
Wild storm of ruin; hope fell dead,
And her high spirit 'neath its own

Intensity was crushed; she said
Nothing responsive—sigh nor groan,
Nor scream nor cry was heard; she threw
Her bleeding eye to heaven and bowed
A moment as in prayer—then grew
Like desperation calm.--A crowd,
As toward St Clara's towers she went,
Followed in mute astonishment
That she should thus defy despair
And her own certain ruin dare.
Soon ceased their marvel--Zulma came
Beneath the window of her cell,
And upward gazed—and sighed the name,
The memory of the victim nun,
The loved, the lost, the lonely one,
Who shed o'er life the only spell
The full heart loves and prizes well.
And as she gazed with mournful eye
On dusky wall and cypress grove,
The soul whose pride could never die,
The spirit of immortal love
That never sheds a human tear,
Was journeying to a holier sphere.

XIV.

“Jesu Maria! who art thou?
“Christ and the Virgin shield us now!”
A warsteed dashes through the throng—
A horseman leaps upon the ground,
And rushes like a maniac strong
Toward dying Zulma, while around
Gather the crowd to mark the scene—
For one so mournful ne'er had been.
Zulma looked up—a faint smile passed,
Like silvery moonbeam on the wave,
O'er lip and eye and then it cast
Behind the death hue of the grave.

Low bowed the horseman, Julian, there,
And fearful was his agony;
He kneeled, like statue of despair,
In hopeless, speechless misery;
But quivering lips and burning brow
Were worse than vain and idle now.
“Zulma”—he said at last, but wild
Came then the memory of his shame,
And Zulma’s eye so proudly smiled
He trembled but to speak her name.
For she was calm as all must be
Who triumph o’er the demon—man,
And hold their pride and purity
Above corruption’s blight and bann.
But life was ebbing fast away
From Zulma’s broken heart and now,
While yet was left a conscious ray
Or never more his words must flow.
He spake at last—his words were few
But full of dark remorseful power,
The out-pourings of the soul’s mildew,
That taints each lovely blooming flower,
Making all life a waste!—The fire
Of being, that had sunk and waned
In Zulma’s bosom, burned again
Brightly a moment and there reigned
A majesty ’mid all her pain
That daunted Julian, as she strove
To rise upon a maiden’s breast;—
“Prince Julian! that thou had’st my love,
“And that in thine I was most blest,
“’Tis bootless now to own; my doom
“Is sealed forever and the tomb
“Must be the resting-place of one
“Who once—who yet loves thee alone;
“Thou hast my pardon while I live—
“*Forgive thyself as I forgive!*”

Backward she fell—faint grew her breath,
Life left her cheek, her brow, her eye;
Slow o'er her heart came chilling death—
Zulma is in eternity!

THE COURTEZAN.

I.

The brand of shame is on thy brow,
The fire of death is in thy heart,
And infamy hath made thee now
From human things a thing apart:
An outcast from all social ties,
Proud conscious virtue's mock and scorn,
Victim of guilt that never dies—
Oh, better thou hadst ne'er been born!

II.

The cold smile, that distorts thy cheek,
Only reveals thy darker ruin,
The guilt-seared heart that will not break,
The damned despair of thy undoing:
Like meteor lights in midnight gloom,
Deepening the darkness vainly hid
Within a foul but painted tomb—
A proud but mouldering pyramid.

III.

The purple robes that round thee wave,
Mocking the form they veil, reveal
The riot of a living grave,
The heart that loathes what it must feel,
Remorse that feeds on deep disgrace,
Despair that spurns atonement's power,
Hell pictured in a laughing face,—
All—all the work of one dread hour!

IV.

Thou wanderest in the world's highway
With a bold brow, and lip profane,
Yet dim hues of a brighter day
Light up thy bosom's realm of pain;
The painted pallor of thy cheek,
The wasting of thy wanton form,
Tell agony no words can speak,
The gnawing of the poison worm.

V.

Barred from the hope that points our way
To happier realms and purer skies,
Thou ever lingerest o'er the day
That sealed thy hopeless agonies,
And as the thought of what thou art
Comes o'er the memory of thy fame,
It leaves a hell within thy heart,
And infamy upon thy name.

VI.

Thy wanton eye—poor child of woe!
Seems lighted at the dæmon's shrine,
It lures to doom—to madness—oh!
To doom and madness such as thine!
Thou art a woman—banned and lost
To all the hopes of woman's fame!
Alas! not hell itself can boast
A fiend like woman doomed to shame.

VII.

They mock and scorn—I pity thee,
Poor victim of confiding faith!
Affection's martyr—yet not free
To meet the martyr's blessed death!
When in deep anguish thou dost think

Of her that bore, that blessed, that nursed thee,
Oh, can we marvel thou shouldst drink
Oblivion of the hour that cursed thee?

VIII.

When driven forth from heart and home
By thine unfeeling father's curse,
What but despair could seal thy doom?
Could want atone or make thee worse?
--Frail woman! in thy best estate
Too prone to err--to doubt too true,
On whom shall rest thy penal fate
When in the awful judgment due?

IX.

Oh! 'tis a fearful thing to view
The dark blight of Love's virgin bloom—
The pale brow wet with death's cold dew—
The warm heart shrouded in the tomb!
Not thy guilt only cast thee forth
A houseless stranger on the world—
But the Fiend's minions—men of Earth
Thee from thy throne of honour hurl'd!

X.

They cast thee out--a Magdalen,
Without a hope, without a home,
A scorn and blot till death, and then
A dæmon in the world to come!
--Veiled hypocrites! beware the hour
When ye shall bear the doom ye brand,
The heart, a lyre of godlike power,
Is judged but by a godlike band.

XI.

Thy face is gay--thy form is fair,
Thy voice sounds light and cheerful now,
But I read shuddering horror there,

And loathing branded on thy brow.
—Go, go thy ways! nought can redeem
With men the heart that errs like thine.
Lost to earth's heaven--thine own esteem,
--Poor victim to the dæmon's shrine!

XII.

Yet, e'en for thee, in all thy shame,
There's cheering hope still left in heaven,
And in THE ATONEMENT's holy name
Thy years of sin may be forgiven!
E'en when thy heart is breaking--when
Thy hunger loathes the bread of lust,
Though scoffed, and scorned, and cursed by men,
Kneel to thy God! repent and trust!

THE CHIEF OF HAZOR.

This poem is founded on the events narrated in the fourth chapter of the book of Judges.

O'er Tabor's height and Ezdraelon's plain
The morn is breaking with a silvery swell
Of light, so beautiful that it doth float
In the blest air, like breathing poetry.
The mountain breeze comes o'er the dewy flowers
With all the freshness and elysian bloom
Of the young heart expanding—(Oh! how soon
To catch the fatal leprosy of guilt!)
When its first thoughts run wild in glorious dreams
Of Fairyland or paradise; and birds
Of rainbow plumage lift on high their songs,
Whose mellow music breathes deep joy and love.
Along the mossy banks, o'er rugged shelves
And sunny pebbles, leaps the living brook,
Rejoicing in the dayspring, while it drinks
The earliest glory of the sunlight's gush;
And the sweet face of nature wears a smile
Of beauty like the image of its God.

Thy glorious Temple, Heaven! thy matchless works
Why should the evil enter? why the voice
Of wailing rise—the hollow groan of death—
The savage shriek of carnage? Why should blood
Stain the rich soil that giveth life to flowers,
And mingle with the sunny lowland rill,
Whose music tells of quietness and love?
—Alas! that man, whose hours are very brief,
Should seek to check the race that soon must end!

The roar of battle sunk to hollow moans
Far o'er the reeking field and fast he fled,
The haughty Chief of Hazor, Sisera,
From his benetted chariot, and alone,
Like a shunn'd leper, held his rapid way
Through the dark woods of Tabor. Ne'er before
Had Jabin's captain quail'd, though fearless foes
And mighty had come down upon his host,
Like an unbroken cataract; but now
The hero fled in panic haste, and oft
He shudder'd as he heard the victor shout
Behind; and then his proud o'ermaster'd heart
Fell in his bosom like the purple haze
Upon the desert pilgrim, while he thought
That spear and oxgoad had availed against
His archers, clad in armour, and the strength
Of iron chariots, drawn by barbed steeds.

It is a bitter thing to see the pride
Of a high spirit thus cast down and crush'd
Beneath the darkness of its destiny;
The toil of years repaid, in one dark hour,
By scorn and infamy; the patient thought,
The watching and the weariness—the brunt
Of battle and the countless woes of war
All borne in vain; the lofty consciousness
Of high deserving mantled o'er with shame;
And he, who long had been the battlement
Of his adoring country—in whose eye
The King hath read the oracles of war—
Whose serried falchion, like a glorious star,
Hath lighted oft the path of victory,
In one brief hour dethron'd from men's esteem,
And driven forth from his own place of pride—
An outcast—with a price upon his head!

Dark was the soul of Sisera! His king
Had gazed upon him with an eye, whose light

Had shed its glory o'er his path! his brow
Had gleamed with victor radiance o'er the Chief;
And higher honours mark'd his last farewell.
The hoary seer of Ashtaroth had blessed
The warrior when he parted for the fight.
Maidens had scatter'd roses in his path,
And beardless boys before his war-horse run,
Shouting the name of Sisera! and now—
Nor slain nor victor! thus before the foe,
The sons of herdmen, hurrying like a bann'd
And outlaw'd thief! The Chief had recked of death
And feared it not; *he had not thought of this!*
Alas! he knew not, till this hour, how much
The human heart may bear—how darkly work
The mysteries of destiny—how low
The loftiest may be humbled, and the best
Stained, spurned and branded—sealed and garnered up
To meet the doom their pride seeks not to shun!

The mists of morn still linger'd in the vale,
That skirted the deep base of Tabor's height;
And hurriedly, through the dark mazes of the wood,
He fled and threw aside his casque and spear
And mail of many shekels, for his strength
Had sunk in the wild battle, where he wrought
The last deeds of his high renown—and now
What more could proven arms avail the Chief?
His glorious name was lost—his honour soiled—
His proud king's curse hung o'er him—and he heard
Low lurking catamites, around the throne,
Whisper disgrace and craven treachery!
Stung by the thought, he broke his gory sword,
And threw the blade dishonoured in the brook,
But kept the jewelled hilt, for there were words
And names of glorious import graven there!
He paused not e'en to quaff the lucid stream,

Or bathe his burning forehead—but kept on—
The mighty, though the fallen Sisera!

The warrior came to Jael's tent. His limbs
Were weary, and his mighty frame grew weak
In the despairing sickness of his heart.
With a fair faithlessness, the subtle wife
Of Heber wooed the warrior from his path,
Who nothing craved but safety and a cup
Of water from the fountain that gush'd forth
Amid the palm-grove, in whose centre stood
The Kenite's tent—upon the border land.
And he lay down within; the beaded dew
Of his soul's agony hung on his brow,
The arrow's bloody path was o'er his breast,
That heaved as it would burst in the wild war
Of master passions—blasted pride, and shame
That gasped for vengeance—and revenge that quailed
Before disgrace—and mocked the heart it seared.
The Ætna of the bosom never sleeps!
The fever of wild enterprize—the rush,
The roar of strife—the speed of hot pursuit
Or breathless flight, fill the proud heart with power
E'en when the glory 's lost—but when the pause
Follows, and the discerning mind beholds
The universal ruin—the wild waste
Of all its honours—the disgrace, despair,
And desolation—it doth sink to sleep,
The oblivion of all hope, all human fear,
The only blessedness not reft away,
Like a sweet child that knoweth not a care.

Though allied to the invaders of their rich
And pleasant heritage—their ancient lot—
Yet Heber long had flourished 'neath the smile
Of Hazor's king—nor wrong had he sustained,
Nor injury in word or deed. His days

Had glided on in peace since he had dwelt
In Harosheth of the nations, and his tent
Had found due honour in the wildest strife,
Nor had the deepest want unjustly snatched
An ewe lamb from his flock.--But, thro' all times
The open heart, the ready hand hath wrought
Woe to the giver, and confiding truth
Received a dark reward! Like a fair tree,
The evil flourish to a reverend age—
The good wear out their strength in early youth
And perish—and their memories are forgot!
—It is a sickening task to look abroad
This dark and evil world! high hearts must bleed
Beneath the torture—generous feelings turn
To anguish 'neath the infliction of the vile,
And the proud power of thought become a curse
Amid the meshes of men's villanies!
Thus it hath ever been--and Heaven's great name
Must bear the dark reflection of man's deeds,
For with its holiness he covereth them.
The warrior slumbered deeply--and the folds
Of his dark mantle quiver'd as the breath
Gushed forth, like a wild torrent, from a heart
Weary and worn and tried and broken now
When its proud pulse throbbed deepest. The orient
morn
Was beautiful as dreams of other realms;
The palm was full of music, and the pine
Sent up mysterious melody; the hues
Of the rich lotus and bright aloe glowed,
While from the soft green vale the mellow air
Stole through the tent and breathed upon the brow
Of Sisera as he slept!

Jael drew near
With feathery footsteps, like a guilty thing,
And listened as she bent o'er the dark Chief.

Her starting eye did wander in wild fear,
A demon light was on her brow—her lips
Had that compression, which implies resolve
Of something terrible; upon her cheek,
'Mid corselike paleness, sat the hectic spot
Of the assassin—from the accusing heart
A fearful witness! and her coal-black hair
Fell in unequal clusters down her neck,
That had a swanlike curve, and, as she bent,
Dropped o'er her panting bosom.—She came near,
And drew aside the covering from the face
Of the dark warrior chief, and on him gazed.

Dark were the dreams of Sisera! His brow,
Scarr'd by the casque of war, and harrowed up
With many burning thoughts and sleepless cares,
Quivered convulsively; his sallow cheek
Was flushed by the last fever of his heart;
His mighty bosom rose and fell, like seas
When the great spirit of the tempest reigns;
His hand, still gauntleted, had grasped the hilt
Of his dishonour'd sabre, and his lips
Mutter'd strange words that sounded mournfully;
(His spirit fought the battle o'er again,
And he was struggling for the victory.)
Dark Sisera arose and drave his sword
Through the thick tent—and smiled; and then sunk
down

As if it nought availed—and sighed like one
Whose hopes have vanished—whose despair is fixed,
And slumber'd yet more deeply—though the shades
Of thought passed o'er his war-worn countenance
Like mountain shadows o'er a mirror'd lake.

Jael knelt down beside the chief, and drew
Aside his clustering locks, which toil and grief
Had changed from the dark beauty of his youth,

And like a fiend, gazed on the chieftain.—Pause.
Woman! hast thou a son? There 's one afar
To whom that warrior's filial smile is dear!
E'en now she looketh for her child—her heart
Is trembling for her firstborn and her best!
Hast thou a boy, dark Jael?—Lo! her lips
Murmur—"My son shall judge the land for this,
"A glory to the nation of the Lord!"
(Thou Merciful! why dost thou spare the guilt,
That clothes itself in thine all spotless name!)
Lifting the fatal weapon, while her eye
Glowed with a dark ferocity, she drave,
At one quick blow, the iron through his brain.

Up, like a goaded lion, sprang the Chief!
The burning blood poured down his long dark beard,
And fell, like lava, on his bosom—still
His strength was equal to the deadly strife
Of man with man. But when the hero saw
A woman's triumph o'er him—when he felt
His uttermost disgrace—thus—thus to die
Alone, unhonoured, by a woman's hand,
Without a word, a signal, or a look,
He fell; his giant limbs relaxed—his head
Rolled on the earth—and his last quivering gasp
Went forth like an undying curse of doom.

So perish'd Hazor's pride! Oh, happier thus
To die, the mighty by the weak—the great
By the low dastard, than to live a scorn,
A blot, a loathing, an assassin host,
A dark-soul'd traitor! Jael! be thy name
A damned sound—a word that blasts the lips
Till the wild Arab doth a deed like thine!

THE BLUE BIRD.

Sweet herald of the bloomy spring!
Thou first adventurer from the sunny south!
Like memory's thoughts of guiltless youth,
Is thy blithe music on the outspread wing.

Thy gladdening song comes on my ear
Like mellow music on a moonlight dream,
And, while I listen, shadows seem
To take the form of things beloved and dear.

And round my dreamy spirit throng
The hopes and feelings of its earlier years,
And baffled smiles and buried tears
Attend, as wont, on thy remembered song.

For, oh, I loved thee, little bird!
When life yet numbered moments since its birth,
And I beheld the flowery earth
As pleasure's paradise—oh! how I erred!

In those glad hours thou wert as gay
As my free spirit in its lonely mood,
And clear and shrill thine early lay
Rose mid the fresh and budding solitude.

First spirit of the northern waste!
Like me, alone to sing, it was thy doom,
And e'er thy notes of love went past
Like half-heard prophecies of joys to come.

Then I could greet the virgin spring
With voice as gay and musical as thine,
For many a cruel grief was mine
When snow-gales moaned along on icy wing.

And now—even now, when Time hath thrown
Dark shadows o'er the sunlight of my days,
'Tis bliss to hear thee and to own
The charm that lingers in thy broken lays.

The same sweet songs thou still doth sing
As in the years that cannot be reversed,
And every note to me doth bring
Hours blessed by love or by oppression cursed.

So o'er the rushing cataract's foam
And noise of waters the bright sun looks down,
And hangs a glorious sunbow crown
E'en where the billows in their terror come.

There 's not a budding leaf—a flower—
A bird—or living creature on the earth,
But o'er man's spirit, from his birth,
Holds deep though subtle, strong though sightless power.

All human things were made for mind—
The highest thoughts oft flow from lowliest things;
The soul hath many tireless wings
To search out nature and all human kind.

Sweet bird! there are who hear thee sing
With bounding hearts and spirits free—but they
Are revelling in life's holiday
And all their thoughts are rosy as the spring.

For me thy song hath other spells,
And higher morals of more thoughtful kind,

For in the eye that looks behind
Sorrow's dark shadow ever deeply dwells.

From all the weary past I cull
Flowers that may crown good deeds in days to come,
And long in fragrant bloom endure
Till from earth's beauty summoned to the tomb.

Dear Nature! teach thine erring son,
Who ever loved thee with a holy love,
Amid thy sacred scenes to rove
Guiltless of sins around him daily done.

Oh! may his hours be gladly passed
In duty's cause--to heaven's approval here;
And his high welcome to a happier sphere
Sound like the Blue Bird's song--at evening's close--
the last.

A SONG OF OTHER YEARS.

Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Burns.

I.

WHEN the dim glory of lost love appears
Like shadowing lamps around the nameless dead,
And the heart wanders through far distant years,
And vainly weeps o'er joys forever fled,
Thought lingers long in sorrow's pathless maze,
And counts with tears the slow departing days.

II.

When at the silent vesper hour we turn
To gaze, once more, on Youth's all-radiant hours,
The smiles of hope again in beauty burn,
And perfume breathes round rapture's blighted bowers,
And love uplifts devoted hearts to heaven,
And Time rolls by like sunlight of the even.

III.

As night's pale queen, when farthest from the sun,
Fills her bright orb with most resplendent light,
So in my heart,—as years successive run,
Love brighter grows in memory's visions bright;
And time and distance only stretch the chain
That links the bleeding heart to endless pain.

IV.

From earth's low cares, anxieties, and woes,
The spirit turns, at twilight's hallowed hour,
To the dark scene whence all its sorrows rose,
And weeps unseen, like evening's closing flower;
Musing how blest affection's visions seemed
Ere dark despair asked what its madness dreamed.

V.

Too blest for earth—these early hopes that sprung
From fancy's picturing touch that dwells on high;
And deathless passion o'er the scene hath flung
Clouds whose sole light is lightning—and the sky
Of starry azure, full of love and bloom,
Deepens in darkness and a fiery gloom.

VI.

Love clings to its idolatry and turns
Hourly, through years of wandering and despair,
Where the pure altar of its worship burns,
And kneels and weeps and prays for ever there;
Tears nourish e'er the flame that never dies,
And perfume's wafted in eternal sighs.

VII.

Dearer—far dearer to the feeling heart
Betrothed love seems, when wedded to the grave;
How much more precious unto me thou art
Than thou hadst been—to earthly woes a slave—
Sweet Mary now! I muse of thee as One
Pure as the light of Heaven's eternal throne.

VIII.

Nought taints thy beauty; and thine image seems
Like a young Peri, all too good for earth,
When it dawns nightly on my wandering dreams,
And calls each high and pure affection forth;

I gaze and gaze in rapture on thy charms,
And wake and grieve that air is in my arms.

IX.

To me more lovely is thy shadow's shade
Than all the fairest of fair womankind;
Dearer than kingdoms our frequented glade,
Whose flowers and verdure live--within my mind;
Love sanctifies the spot it treads upon,
And Time forgets that many years have flown.

X.

Far--far away, on Susquehannah's shore,
The evening star looks down upon thy tomb,
Where I shall wander never--never more,
As once, with thee, 'mid twilight's mellow gloom;
But, ah, it nought avails where I may roam--
Thou art to me an ever-present home--

XI.

A Paradise of thought--a heaven of dreams,
A fairy rainbow of the vision'd mind,
Where nothing is, though every beauty seems--
Where pictures pass, like music on the wind,
That comes we know not whence, and hurries on
We know not where; 't was here, 't there, 't is gone!

XII.

How vain his trust--how hopeless man's best hope!
Why should we weave a rosy wreath to crown
To-morrow's ruin? Why, undoubting, drop
Life's anchor in a quicksand? One by one,
The fondest ties are sundered, and we go
Mourners o'er earth, and victims unto woe.

XIII.

Wasted and weary--waiting for thy end,
Bowed to the dust and desolate in heart,

Broken, without the pillar of a friend
To hold thee from the barren clay thou art,
O what on earth is left thee, child of grief!
What voice can speak--what heart can bring relief?

XIV.

Where wilt thou turn--thou broken-hearted youth?
Thy years scarce mark thy centuries of woe:
Where in the world wilt thou discover truth?
Or who can love when grief hath laid thee low?
'Mid throngs companionless--unmoved by mirth,
Thy foot doth tread alone the desert earth.

XV.

Men pass and smile and mock thee with their words,
But thou art reckless, and they blast thy name,
But thou dost take no note; though piercing swords
Sweep down the bright green harvest of thy fame,
Thine eye observes not; in thy bosom dwell
Far deadlier foes than things of earth or hell.

XVI.

Love blasted in its budding--visions fair
Of future glory clouded at their dawn--
Life's fondest hopes all withered, and despair
The tyrant of thy dungeon--timid fawn
Amid earth's blood-hounds! what remains for thee
But misery, madness, and cold mockery?

XVII.

Where canst thou hide thy weary throbbing heart?
Thy friends are wasted and thy loves grown cold;
Few know, none love thee--and, with bow and dart,
Many pursue thee to thy loneliest hold;
For hatred never in its vengeance tires,
But burns like its own native demon fires.

XVIII.

Oh! "true love never did run smooth;" so said
The enchanter and all ages speak it truth;
Base mammon triumphs o'er the quick and dead,
And madness bears companionship with youth;
Misery brings death--remorse attends despair--
Love weds the grave and silence slumbers there.

XIX.

Oh! visions of endearment, love and bliss
Arise like mockeries and cloud my brain;
The fire-side joys--the converse sweet, the kiss--
The smile of babes--dreams! never come again!
Leave to the wretch his hopelessness--but spare
His heart a vision of the things that were.

XX.

Mary! sad theme of many a mournful song!
Thou sweet name of despair! thou airy dream
Of fatal words! I treasure all thy wrong,
Thy love, thy loveliness; do thou but *seem*
What once thou *wert!* oft dawn upon my heart,
And let thine *image* tell me that thou *art*.

THE ROMAN CATACOMBS.

EMPIRE of Death and nation of the Dead !
With trembling awe celestial, through thy realm
Of stillness, lighted by a flickering lamp,
Whose quivering flame just trembles on the verge
Of darkness, and displays unreal things,
I tread in silence, and my spirit feels
A luxury of terror, and a dread
Sublime in its infinitude, while o'er
This peaceful land where man hath learned to dwell
In quiet with his fellow, I with step
Soundless, wander to muse. 'Tis a dread place
For those whose trembling spirits quail at death
And his high attributes! O'er the damp walls
Flit shadows spectral, and the startled ear
Tensely attentive, doth create wild sounds,
And tomblike voices, whose strange language spells
The daunted heart, and fires the reeling brain;
And on each side, in dread array appear
The mighty congregations of the dead;
Not phantoms as their spirits be, but still
Things of proportion as they were in life,
Though they move not, as erst they did, from sense
Internal, but are swayed by passing things,
And speak in voices not their own; the forms,
Anciently seen upon the Earth, are now
Degenerated to that strange state which lives
Between the vital living and the things
In the world's creed thought dead. Sensations wild
And agonizing wake within the heart
At maddening meditation on the fate
Mortality involves; and spirits proud

Quail at the glance of him whose chilling touch
Freezes both thought and feeling;—but there is
A glory and a majesty, a power
Immortal mid the Empire of the Dead.

Here all is peace; distinctions die with man,
And pride and power, and high and low lie down
Together like fond twins, and slumber here
Forgetful of degree; the cardinal
And haughty count with monk and peasant sleep,
Undreaming of to-morrow's festival
Or hierarchal pomp; no crosiers here,
Nor coronets, nor golden robes, nor crowns
Of triple dominance, the humble garb
Of meek dependence mock; but lordly prince
And haughty priest lie side by side with him
Who chronicled in memory the hour
His spade was honoured by their 'scutcheoned graves.
This is the tomb of Nations; and upon
Yon broken statue I will rest awhile,
And meditate on death; burn up, my lamp!
No Sun of life lights this vast darkling cave.
Methinks there is a mighty power within
My spirit, that I feel such glorious thoughts
Roll like sun-billows o'er my swelling brain.
The world would scorn the act whose affluence
Of thought e'en Angels would be proud to own.
But, oh, thou Father of my soul! I bless
And worship thee that I'm not of the world.
When thy pure Spirit purifies my heart
From this life's blots, and liberates my soul
From mortal fardels, and doth place me where
I may be one of thy own Angel choir,
My theme of praise to thee shall ever be
That thou didst give to me a soul above
The sickening follies of this guilt-seared World.

This subterranean mansion ages since
Was made to shield the persecuted race
Of humble Christain worshippers from rage
Of pagan bigotry; and oft, perchance,
The solitary follower of Him
Who was the Prince of peace, hath sat alone
Where I do now in sadness, listening close
For signal of discovery, and the first
Object that met his wearied eye hath been
A headless, mangled brother, or a child
Rescued from Vultures. Bitter was the bread
Of mortal sustenance, but sweet the pain
Suffered to those who felt a loftier range
Of being in this dungeon than the prince
Who reigned despotic o'er Earth-shadowing Rome.
The cold clay was their couch—the dripping rock
Their pillow, and their food the scant supplies
Of short occasion or quick passing chance;
And the sweet sympathies of life, the joy
Of tender hearts that feel their heaven is love,
The mingling of unwounded feelings, were
Few and unlasting; yet the unfaltering sense
Of godlike piety upheld their hearts
And filled their spirits with a strong-winged faith,
Which rose to paradise amid the gloom
Of their long banishment.—Where are they now?
And where their foes, the mighty men of Rome?
They sleep together in yon glittering piles
Of limbs and skulls, and he, who on the rack
Or in the cauldron, or 'mid savage beasts
Perished, lies now beside his murderer
And links his bony hand with his who plied
The torture or the fire, or goaded on
The frenzied Lion, fiercest.—Senators
And slaves, and knights and servitors, and high
Dames and their lowly damsels; meek and proud,
The wise man and the fool, and friend and foe,

Lie mingled indivisibly; and all
Who, living, waged eternal warfare—fierce
Banditti and their victims sleep in peace
Beside the mitred lords whose curses poured
Unceasingly against them; their rude wars
And bitter feuds, taunts, jeers and scoffings now
Are past; we hear of them as tales of death
Befitting only horror's wild romance.
And here I sit amid a perished world;
And 'tis, methinks, a better place to dwell
Within, than that polluted one they call
Land of the living; for a dead man shows
More nature and true tenderness in look,
Action and attitude, than the base herd,
Who cannot breathe except in poisoned air.
The dead lie not; their speech and intercourse
Is silent but 'tis faithful; no poor forms
And ceremonies chain the bleeding heart
In converse with the slumbering sons of clay.
Acquaintance long and guarded there is none—
Ere one can speak a thought or do a deed
That chimes with his desire; and so I love
The dead as friends who ever speak the truth;
They give me better counsel than this vain
And prating world; and he, who lives among
The buried nations, doth derive his thought
Of might and grandeur from those fountains whence
Nor ill, nor wrong, nor malice, ever flow.
The silent eloquence of this lone place
Prepares the bodied spirit, which doth groan
And bleed below, for paradise; 'tis here
Man sees and feels the little thing he is.
Since the first hour of conscious misery,
And tortured feeling and corroding thought,
When hath the period been we did not wish
For Death as for a proud deliverer
From woes and agonies he never knew?

When hath the time existed spirits high
Longed not to throw aside the bonds of death
That bind us here, and live in glorious climes,
Fitting their own ethereal nature? None
But cowards, slaves and villains dread the hand
That doth disrobe us of the blood-wet vest,
Which saturates our spirits with the gore
Of agony; the wretch who craveth life
I would condemn as one unfit to live.

In such a dome as this—the sepulchre
Of ages, it were glorious fate to die,
Beholding the assembly venerable
Of Roman lords and mitred saints, and all
The thorn-crowned martyrs smiling that their son,
Tired of the pains of time, and wearied out
With this world's crimes and miseries, had come
To join the council of the hall of Death.
Then should we look upon the maddening strife
For nothing, which corrodes our bleeding hearts,
With due derision; and contemplate all
Our hopes and purposes and proud desires,
And lofty feelings and aspiring thoughts,
And wasted hours and bitter sufferings,
As phantoms of a maniac's dream. Alas!
We cannot act ourselves; we are chained down
By fashions and by follies, and made dupes
Of action artificial; all is changed.
Than this delightful world, no fairer thing
Sprung from the plastic touch of Deity;
Amid the unbounded Universe there rolls
Creation none more beautiful; but, oh!
This fairy palace of delightful things
A lazaretto has been made by man,
Within whose loathsome porticoes and towers
Dwell want, disease and wretchedness and crime.
The balmy airs, that once flew fanning o'er

Its gardens of delight, and loved to kiss
The lovely creatures who, like Peris, roved
Around its fragrance breathing bowers, now move
Heavily on leaden wings amid the steam
Of the wide reeking pestilence; the songs
Of gladness that erst rose to Heaven are changed
To wailings of despairing misery.
And yet upon this scene of turbulence,
And war and sin and rank pollution, still
Heaven smiles as wont, save that its clouds oft weep
That man, misguided man should ever prove
The deadliest of foes to his own peace.

Night wanes in her dark circuit; and my lamp
Dimly illumines the lone catacomb.
And forth I must depart—to live again
Among the living of the sunny Earth.
Yet, oh ye dead! ye e'er have been to me
Wiser and kinder than the breathing race,
And oft amid the volumed lore which glows
With the soul's light, I've passed both day and night,
And gathered knowledge which hath been to me
A counterpoise to all my heart hath borne.

Farewell, ye dead! ye once were great, and Time,
When he watched o'er the growth and perfect power
Of energies ye once possessed, beheld
No mightier things beneath the shadowing sky.
But ye are nothing now; and none can tell
Or name or lineage; so all must *be*,
And then *be not*; appear and vanish, like
The foamy wake, which a fleet sailing barque
Leaves murmuring a moment in its path.

THE LOVER'S LAMENT.

Good night! the last dim hues of day
Fade o'er the deep blue sea on high,
And hope and rapture with that ray
Sink to despair's deep agony.

The tinted hues of evening fade
O'er the cold welkin's cloudy west,
As Hope's long lingering funeral shade
Shrouds the lone bower of love unblest.

The vision of departed years
Lingers as loth to leave the scene,
Where, thro' the heart's despairing tears,
The memory gleams of what hath been

Night, ebon night, veils every scene
Where oft we met and mingled souls—
Oh, that thy smiles had never been!
My pulse throbs wild, my mad brain rolls.

A burst of moonlight feeling gleams
O'er my fond heart's deserted bower,
And memory lies in pictured dreams,
While Love weeps o'er the parting hour.

Away—away! my boiling blood
Maddens my dizzy brain, whene'er
I think that Envy's hell-born brood
Barred me the love of one so dear.

Relax—relent! thou swelling sail!
Spare me a moment's thought of her!
O, how my senses faint and fail
As memory's starlight shades recur.

I ask not hours to throb and thrill
With dark remembrance, waxing wild,
The sickness of my soul would kill
Ere I could dwell on passion foiled.

I ask but one long lingering look,
One glance at that o'ershadowed spot,
Where love his purple pinions shook,
Where all I held as heaven—is not!

Thou cliff! from whose aerial brow
My wild eye drank her dryad form,
Oh! keep the soul-beams on thee now,
Through sunny days, and nights of storm!

And hear the wailing tones that swell
Above thy cold and dazzling height;
They ring a spirit's funeral knell;
The doleful dirge of past delight.

Farewell! I ne'er shall gaze again
On mansion, cliff, or stream, or tree,
Where meet Life's bliss and Death's last pain,
And wails the lyre of agony!

* * * * *

A light gleams from yon casement high,
And flashes in my tearful gaze,—
There—there the lattice meets my eye,
Where oft we sat in happier days.

And 'tis her hand that waves the light,
For me?—for me? no! madness tells

She waits the dalliance fond to-night
Of—how my bosom pants and swells!

I will not think—I'll plunge afar
Beneath the ocean's booming wave,
Where gleams nor sun, nor moon, nor star,
Where the dead throng, and demons rave—

Ere I will speak the accursed name
Of him who, fiendlike, stole my love;
Hell's branded demons better claim
As brothers, and their deeds approve!

But her—alas! I cannot feel
One haughty pulse, one hating thought;
My heart will ever basely kneel
Before the shrine my passion wrought.

I cannot scorn to dream of one
Who ne'er will think nor care for me,
And I must trace, when all undone,
The meshes of my destiny.

Oh! that her lips would breathe a curse
O'er every step of life's wild track,
That I might ban the universe,
And hurl my proud defiance back!

Then I would ride the lightning's wing,
And catch the vollied bolts of heaven,
'Mid the wild winds in triumph sing,
And shout and yell where they had riven.

And I would dare their maddest power,
Echo their echoes o'er the sky,
And in destruction's awful hour
Forget my bosom's agony.

Alas! alas! it cannot be!

Time, fate, chance, foe have done their worst!
Earth, ocean, air, are nought to me—

Oh! that my panting heart would burst!

Who—who can bear a rapier smile?

A kiss that dooms *the soul* to death?
The anguish of the Serpent's guile?
The nectar upas of the breath?

I—I *will* bear it—stern and high,

Nor brand my brow with characters
Each pitying fool can read, and sigh
In grief of scorn for him who bears.

Good Night, ye hills and valleys fair!

I love to hold converse with you;
She claims no parting but despair,
Nature still wins a last—Adieu!

THE REIGN OF GENIUS.

THE spirit cannot die; it must dilate
Eternally, and be a vital part
Of everlasting ages—knitted close
To absolute infinity and linked
With the immensity of fate; 'tis just
It should be deathless, for its glorious powers
No limit know nor border, shining through
Creation like Hyperion; but the heart
Will prey upon its energies and hang
A mountain on its wings, for subtle thought
Is but the slave of feeling, and the soul
Will languish when the bosom aches and be
The vassal of locality, depressed
By poor contingencies and habitudes.
Life's feeble purposes demand the use
Of powers almost angelic, for the soul
Is like the sun, though stationed in the skies,
It must look down on earth and light alike
Things beautiful and loathsome. Be it so!

Spirits of greatness have human form
And feature, like the veriest thing that gropes
And grovels in the mind's midnight; and they pass
Before the world as other mortal shapes,
And, though the eye may beam unusually,
The brow wear deeper lines of thought intense
Than others, and the glow and gloom of hope,
The sunlight and the darkness of the soul
Vary the changeful feature, and the tread
Be more unequal and the outward bearing

More plainly intellectual than the step
And look of the great mass, yet deeply dwells,
Unseen, impalpable, the living beam
Of glorious light that issued from the sun
Of the Divinity; and, unbeheld
By creatures of most ordinary note,
Beings pass by in silence or they stand
Apart, in general estimation held
The vassals of the world, whose spirits are
More fitting glory and would wear the robes
Of angels more to nature than the shapes
Mortality has burdened them withal.

Such Spirits fill the universe--they live
In the blue ether and their dwelling-place
Is the immensity above; they sit
Upon the thrones of seraphs in the stars
And hold converse with them when starry night
The gay earth canopies and nature folds
Her moonlight drapery round her and lies down
By bright Hyperion's side to bridal sleep.
This world of peril they in thought forget
And all its crimes and woes, and they become
Associates with the blest in pure desires
And feelings holy; and they love to tread
The verge of paradise though mortal yet,
Seeking to know the loves that blossom there,
The joys that never fade in those bright fields,
The thoughts of bliss expanding ever through
The pauseless ages of undying love.
Such spirits find no thoughts reciprocal
In earthly beings; none can estimate
Their greatness rightly; none can feel the same
Dissolving and absorption of all powers
In soft elysian visionry; they live
Alone, starbeams round the sun-throne of God!

The sovereign eagle ever dwells alone
In solitary majesty, and waves
His mighty wings in air unbreathed by things
Of lowlier nature; and the lion walks
His monarch path untended and alone;
So the proud spirit lives in loneliness
All uncommuning, and its solitude
Becomes its empire where it reigns for e'er
In might and majesty.--But when 't is chained
Down in the world's cold prison-house, and mocked
By gazing folly and unholy guile,
And taunted by the reptile hordes around,
Madness springs up within the brain and glares
In deadly fury from the eye and whelms
The spirit prostrate which could be subdued
Only by its own despair! the throned mind
Is to itself a god and its high powers,
Like golden chains, are linked unto the skies.
The boundless universe with all its worlds
Of stars and suns is but a narrow path
For the immortal spirit; one bright glance
Of the soul's eye pervades all space and flies
Beyond the farthest reckoning of the sage
Who reads the heavens; the winged thought sublime
Wanders unresting through creation's worlds.
And searches all their glorious beauties, till,
Yet unsatisfied, it would rove through realms
E'en angels know not of, when some keen pang,
Dark passion, want or weakness murders thought,
And brings the almighty spirit down to earth,
And all its chilling woe and bitterness.

THE DEATH OF TIME.

THERE was a gladness in the hearts of men
When dew-lipp'd Eve upon the purple sky
In virgin beauty stood and bade adieu
To the Sun-Spirit as his crimson wings
In the far distance waved like gossamer;
There was rejoicing in the look she threw
Into the blue infinitude to watch
The latest beam of day; and, when she turned
Her twilight glance upon this world, and spread
Her dusky veil o'er nature, there was love
In her ethereal attitude, and joy.
But Earth's gay habitants beheld the soft
Dimness of eve slow fading into night,
With hearts that breathed not of the holiness
That flowed from heaven and all the rosy fields.

But Night, at man's unholy madness wroth,
And startled at his wassailry, arose
From her dark couch and shrieked so fearfully
To heaven that angels on each other gazed
In deep astonishment, for sinners chained
In hell ne'er framed a cry so horrible.
Then she uplifted to the silent heavens
Her thousand voices and invoked the Lord
Of All that Time might be no more! A voice
From heaven's eternal throne of light came forth
And angels echoed—"TIME SHALL BE NO MORE!"
Then awful stillness stretched her leaden wings
Immovably o'er earth and nature slept
In deathful slumbers, save a startling moan
Involuntary ever and anon,
When the lascivious song of godless mirth

And the loud shout of revel rose and went
Forth, the dread witnesses of sin and crime.
The stars looked down and wept, and whispers stole
Along the firmament from each to each,
Communicating doom, while man's seared eye
Beheld the world as erst the gay abode
Of every crime his fancy could create.

Morn leapt upon the mountains, but the light
Was gory crimson, and the lurid vault
Seemed panting while the daybreak airs went by.
No lyric voice was heard; the loveliest birds
By pairs sat mutely on the trees, nor moved
Though the scorched leaves, all crumbled into dust,
Dropped o'er them rapidly; the wondering herds
Wandered unresting o'er the ground and roared
With pain, for the hot earth by inward fires
Was fast consuming; the fell reptiles hissed
Distractingly and thrust their venomed fangs
Against their rocky dens till their last joy,
The woe of man, was gone, and their fierce pain
Augmented by the act that meant relief;
The finny clans of ocean rose and spread
Upon its surface to escape the steam
Of its wide boiling billows, and the loud
Flapping of tortured bodies numberless
Frothed o'er the waters for a thousand leagues.
All nature was in agony—save man!
He slept amid the wailings and the shrieks
Of things to whom eternity was nothing.
What sound will wake the sleeper? Hark!—'tis nought.

'Mid volumes of dark vapour rose the Sun
Affrightingly effulgent, and his glare
Changed the dun concave to a sea of blood.
The World reeled to and fro and things of life
Gasped sobbingly for breath in the thick air.

Beneath day's baleful gleam rocks melted down
And mountains into lava seas—woods fell
And crumbled instantly to earth—fierce flames
Drank up the hissing streams and the hot ground
Rung with a hollow moan. Where—where was man?
Slumbering! what sound will wake the sleeper? Hark!

Creation, wake! it is the knell of Time!
There sounds the Archangel's clarion! The skies
Roll rapidly away; the Sun hath gone
Down the abyss of chaos; demons throng
The gulf o'er which the world reels fearfully.
That fiendish laugh, oh, hear it!—See! the Earth,
The very dying Earth doth rise and shriek
As trembling with the dread that hell hath ta'en
Possession of her beautiful domains.
Darkness becomes material, and throngs
Of waking wretches grasp its stinging folds
With the tenacity of utter woe,
And, though their hearts are bursting, still they cling
Till their frames mingle with the hell-fold night
And they are changed to demons!—Light as pure
As Him from whom it floweth burns above,
And songs of glory echo yells of pain.

With one deep, hollow, rending groan the Earth
Dissolved and fell in fiery particles
Through the dense darkness of chaotic worlds;
And 'mid the horror-palsied multitudes
The fiends passed with infernal smiles the while
Unutterable thoughts of bitter woe
Thronged many a burning brain, and quivering lips
Sought vainly words of prayer and busy tongues,
Erst eloquent coadjutors of thought,
Clove to the roofs of mouths where curses dwelt
Unuttered, and dark bands of felons stood
Close woven to each other's agony,

Yet every moment aggravating pain
General by private instances of spite.
Time hurried to a resting-place to die,
And as he hastened on, prepared to leave
His mission. Death's keen sithe he downward threw,
And, flashing in hell's fires, its piercing edge
Was ever o'er the suffering sinners' heads,
Menacing vengeance yet protracting dread.
'The glass, that numbered hours, now poured its sands
By centuries and 'mid a meteor's glare
Above, he hung it awfully distinct
To eyes that wept their owners' bosom blood,
And, when they asked the close of their fierce pain,
A vivid flame flashed upward and displayed
ETERNITY!—Then Time fell down and died.
But as he fell, amid the awful scenes
Of horror and despair, I saw two forms
Beautiful celestially bend o'er the verge
Of billowy chaos with a look of woe
And agony, and then in fond embrace
Rise upward joyously; a deadly moan
Went through the universe as fast they fled,
For they were LOVE and INNOCENCE!

THE POET'S DREAM.

Upon the rainbow's prisms pinions,
When the spirit was young and airy,
And dancing o'er the pale-blue sky,
A wild-tressed little FAIRY,
In azure robes bedropped with gold,
Came smiling on my eye,
And breathing o'er my heart the bloom,
The odours of the sky.

Around her thronged aerial shapes,
On her wild eye-beam sailing,
And other forms in sapphic notes
Among the Pleiads hailing,
While wavy music, floating far,
Embalmed each hallowed feeling,
And the heart's voice in thrilling notes
On the soul's ear was stealing.

RAPTURE behind the fairy stood,
And rolled his sunbeam eye,
And, as he swept his angel lyre,
The everlasting sky
Its golden waves of ether threw
Along his swelling brow,
And heavenly choirs their music poured
Enchantingly below.

Soft PLEASURE twined the Fairy's locks
Around her silver wires,
And Echo languished meltingly,
While all the fond Desires

Came dancing from the palmy isles
Of rich Hesperides,
To wanton in the amber waves
Of music's sounding seas.

The FAIRY on a rainbow throne,
Amid her lovely train,
Sat, as I, spell-bound, gazed on high,
And heard a seraph strain;
It bore my spirit on its wing
To realms unseen by man,
And paradise around me lay
As when the world began.

'Twas Psyche's song, the Fairy's voice,
And Eden's angel lyre,
And every holy strain it breathed
Did thrilling love inspire;
Transparent on full many a brow
The mighty spirit shone,
And rapt DEVOTION bowed and knelt
Before the rainbow throne.

The strain went past--another rose,
But trembling, timid, low;
Its notes flowed deep, but unexpressed,
And sweet but full of woe;
'Twas Eden's lyre I heard, but touched
By DOUBT's distrusting hand,
And tears were shed and sorrow reigned
'Mid all the astonished band.

The Music then came mournfully,
Like panting evening breeze,
And light shone forth like moonbeams wan
Amid lone willow trees,

And hearts dissolved in pity's tears
At GRIEF's regretful strain,
While star-winged angels bent from heaven,
And sadly sung again.

My melting eye in sorrow's dew
Lost vision for a time,
But, when I raised its look again,
A SHAPE in gloom sublime
Stood mid the ruins of the throne
And crushed the golden lyre,
And darted from his meteor eye
A wild and wasting fire.

A sable host with eyes of guilt
Pursued his desert way,
And lightning flared and thunder crashed,
But, fiercer still than they,
DESPAIR went on in fiery gloom
Through realms once fair afar,
And HOPE, the Fairy's shrieks were heard
Amid the ruthless war.

The sunbow bright I stood upon
In other distant sphere
Dissolved and midnight's fading dream
Disclosed no cause of fear;
But yet, methought, the spirit's lyre
Will echo music only
Unto the spirit's magic touch
Ere sorrow leaves it lonely.

THE DREAM OF THE SEPULCHRE.

In this Poem it is the purpose of the author to suggest and illustrate those unceasing though unprofitable wanderings of the mind, which, discontented with the common allotment, searches after an Arcadian Utopia among the shadows of futurity. The subject has been deemed one of high poetical capability; how far the writer has done justice to his theme is a question that awaits the reply of the courteous reader.

I.

IN solemn commune of the lone still night,
When, throned in heaven, the stars beam brightly clear,
Shedding on earth dim shadowings of that light,
Whose radiance gleams o'er glory's brightest sphere,
I oft have dwelt on that recoiling fear,
That shuddering awe which bows the human mind,
When beckoning shadows in the gloom appear,
Or sheeted phantoms wail in midnight wind,
Dread visitants, uncalled, unto their shuddering kind.

II.

And it hath seemed an awful thing and strange
That unblest spirits o'er the earth should roam,
Unbanned, tho' feared—for ever bringing change,
Sorrow and death—prophetic shades of doom!
Mystery of mysteries! not e'en the tomb
Vouchsafeth slumber unto souls unblest,
But from sepulchral darkness they will come,
From their dark prison and their chill unrest,
And with mute horror freeze the fountains of the breast.

III.

In every age, in every clime, vain man
Hath sought what, found, could give him only woe;
Since the long eras of despair began
He hath desired that knowledge which doth grow
In the dark vale of death alone—and so
His spirit hath no rest—he pants to drink
The waters that will poison ages!--Go!
Turn not! away from horror's dizzy brink,
For vain are all the thoughts thy burning brain can think!

IV.

Dreams, omens, apparitions--tales of eld--
Vague oracles and auspices and charms,
And spells of hoary magi--holy held--
All that electrifies, enchants, alarms,
And lays, as 't were, within our living arms
The secrets of Eternity; all these,
While Life's quick spirit every bosom warms,
Will be, as they have been, the sounding seas,
O'er which man's soul goes forth, a barque before the
breeze.

V.

And these will warp the spirit in their power,
And crush the green buds of the heart, and throw
The gloom of destined grief o'er every hour;
Thus tribulations and hard trials grow
To utter agony--despairing woe--
Low wailing discontent and blasphemy;
Thus hope forsakes us in the rosy glow
Of young desire--and o'er our morning sky
The tempest gathers dark on youth's rejoicing eye.

VI.

Yet gray-hair'd sages, skill'd in secret lore,
Against the fearful creed have vainly striven;

Shadows uncouth have gloomed on dusky shore
And dark bleak heath amid the gathering even;
Strange forms have glimmered o'er the twilight heaven,
E'en to the eyes of wisdom, unlike earth's,
And howling shrieks, upon the tempest driven,
Blanched rosy cheeks round merry crackling hearths,
And frantic mothers mourned o'er diabolic births.

VII.

The lamp's red light hath suddenly turned dim;
Wild hollow gusts moaned o'er the midnight sky;
From halls of banquet wailed the funeral hymn,
While terror clouded the inquiring eye,
And shook the shuddering heart in mastery,
When faltering voices awful knowledge sought,
And pale lips quivered, breathless for reply
To daring question of mysterious Nought,
Whose gibbering accents fell—annihilating thought.

VIII.

Mail'd knights, their helms and gorgets streaming
blood,
And their torn banners spotted with dark gore,
Have blown their warhorns in the mountain wood
Till every cavern echoed to the roar;
And coal-black steeds, mid arrowy lightnings, o'er
The precipice have leapt and clattered on
Through rock-barr'd glens, by ocean's sounding shore,
While their dead riders, from their eyes of stone,
Flashed forth a demon light and raised an awful moan.

IX.

Mid the deep passes of the Odenwold
Or Hartz—meet haunt for fiends that tempt and kill,
The traveller's heart in terror hath grown cold,
As, like a whirlwind, up the haunted hill,

Where all was vast and dark and ghostly still,
He hurried on—nor dared to turn his head—
While yet the night obeyed the demon's will,
And round him flocked an army of the dead,
With juggling giant fiends, who mocked him as he fled.

X.

Where old St Gothard, from his alpine height,
O'erlooks the avalanche and glacier steep,
The monk hath wakened, in a wild affright,
From troubled trances that do murder sleep,
And leave the wearied eye in vain to weep,
While the Wild Huntsman and his train went by,—
Hounds baying, bugles wailing—one wide sweep
Of woodland warfare, that portended nigh
The viewless woes of all called forth to do and die.

XI.

The assassin host hath started from his feast,
When the loud summons shook his castle-gate,
And on his tongue died merry tale and jest
At the dread warning of triumphant Fate!
Through mossgrown towers and vast halls desolate
Till morn re-echoes the slow armed tread,
And, where the ancient chieftain whilome sate,
Fixed eyes unearthly gleam, as if the dead
Were throned in judgment o'er dark deeds of years long
fled.

XII.

Barons have trembled like their vassals when
Death shook his cerements off, and came among
The living, like a victor;—priests have then
Clung to their shrines e'en as the voiceless tongue
Grew to the quivering palate;—vaults have rung
With vigil prayers and groans of agony,
And moans of penance and low dirges sung,

Till the scared worshippers made haste to flee,
And hurried, baffled in their power, in dark crowds
frantically.

XIII.

Mid the deep silence of her sacred cell,
The vestal hath forgot to tell her beads,
And listened to the agonizing yell,
That fearfully revealed most fearful deeds!
Vain, then, were crucifix and prayers and creeds,
Vain the dim vigil and the patient fast—
Still, like the moaning of sepulchral weeds,
Sighs, as of suffering spirits, by her past,
And shrieks thro' cloisters rung—the wildest and the
last.

XIV.

Why come these bodements of approaching ill
O'er Thought, the silent language heaven doth hear?
Why quails the heart, with a pervading thrill,
At the dim shades of what it should not fear?
—All we should know is known and felt;—draw near!
Read the fair volume of the earth and skies!
Rest thou on Hope, without a sigh or tear!
And joy on earth shall be thy glorious prize,
While He, thy Helper reads the fearful mysteries.

XV.

And when thy pathway is beset, and grief
Waits on thee like a shadow, and thou art
An alien from thy kind—a pilgrim-chief
On life's wild desert, yet thy yearning heart
Will cling to its youth's heaven and impart
The tender beauty of its blest repose
To all that lives; so thou dost ne'er depart
From truth revealed, nor crown thy many woes
By dark distrust and doubt that round thy spirit close.

XVI.

Strange things have been, if there be truth in oath,
And mighty men have been o'ercome with dread,
And holy priests of bell and book—though loth
To quail before the inessential dead;
The wisest, purest, bravest, best have fled
From midnight wailings and mysterious forms,
Nor dared to watch the slow unsounding tread,
Nor hear the shrieks, mid wildly bickering storms,
Of souls unblest that howled o'er their cold bed of worms.

XVII.

And mind hath quailed to phantasies, and signs
Upon the heart have fallen like a hell;
Life hath been measured by the palmer's lines,
Whose hours allotted God alone can tell;
And seasons have been sanctities, whose spell
Was bane to beauty and a blight to love;
And men have drunken at the merlin's well
Till demons peopled every idol grove,
And shut from human eyes the glory from above.

XVIII.

"We meet at Philippi!" the Phantom said,
And Rome was lost when her last hero fell—
Fell where the ghost of vanquished Cæsar led,
While Freedom vanished and the funeral knell
Toll'd for her country!—To the wizard's cell
Crowds throng to perish 'neath inflicted fears
Deeper and deadlier than their dreaded hell,
While ghastly spectres of predestined years
Gasp hideous smiles and mock at unavailing tears.

XIX.

There is a voice in every leaf that stirs
Amid the greenwood, when the twilight air

Sighs through the oaken boughs or close thick firs,
Revealing future glory or despair;
And melancholy Thought from things that are
Catches dim glimpses of the days to come,
And thus sky, earth and sounding ocean wait
The ghastly glimmer of a quivering gloom,
The hue of voiceless Fear—the terror of the Tomb.

XX.

The mind of Man! a strange and awful Power!
Seraphic brightness shadowed o'er by dust!
A god that left its paradise an hour,
And clothed itself in clay—its hope and trust
Still yearning for the mansions of the just.
Dimmed, not polluted, by the body's ills,
(Like virgin gold most bright beneath its rust)
The spirit here its pilgrimage fulfils,
And heaven receives its thoughts, as ocean countless
rills.

XXI.

To die is doom and Life enacts our Death—
That should not daunt us nor the manner how;
So we escape the villenage of breath,
And all the sorrows that beset us now;
But in the deep guilt of a broken vow,
And sin unpardoned, to behold the ban
And fear yet shun it not—oh! this is woe
Which quenches mind, that cannot choose but scan
The endless errors and the destiny of man.

XXII.

Mid the vast pomp of Judah's sacred fane
The holy man in glistening ephod passed,
And marked the Chosen; while, like April rain,
Guilt's blood poured forth; and thus, until the last,

Crime unredeemed will stain the boundless waste
Of life,—and he that sinneth can but die;
Yet for the few who shun the desert blast
Of Evil, joy still dwells beneath the sky,
And Hope that mounteth up—whose Eden is on high.

XXIII.

To thoughtful wisdom every spot of earth
Is full of beauty, every sound, of joy,
And the soul revels in its deathless birth,
And feels in age the genius of the boy.
So He ordains who dwelleth in the sky,
Though billowy clouds float round about His throne,
And darkness His pavilion is on high,
For justly He beholdeth all that 's done,
And chooseth from the earth the souls that are His own.

XXIV.

The world is full of terror—terror born
Of what we know not; like the sacred gold
That Brennus stole from Delphi, left forlorn,
Life is a fatal treasure! we grow old
In early youth and human joy is sold
For fear that bringeth woe; bound down, girt round
With woes we never can on earth unfold,
We still must bear, while every sight and sound
Chills the wild breaking heart in sorcery's fetters bound.

XXV.

We are not of the things we seem; there lies
A boundlessness we search not—cannot know
Around, and, like the starry fields and skies,
Thoughts distant mingle in a maze of woe
And break the spirit down and o'er us throw
The robe of Nessus; knowledge skills not here;
In the dark commune of a dream, we grow

Unto the things we fashion and the tear,
Unshed, doth turn to ice and this the heart must bear.

XXVI.

The spirit cannot grasp what it defines;
All must believe what none can comprehend;
Our Fate must trace the long, the fatal lines
That bind our hearts and with their being end!
We are but shadows here; strange things that blend
Oft with the earth—sometimes, with heaven; like snow,
Pure in the dayspring of our birth, we bend
After in the world's wide pathway and soon grow
Familiar with Earth's guilt and all the sinner's woe.

XXVII.

Dark visions of the Sceptic! where ye lead
Thousands will follow; what ye teach, believe!
Tremble! dim reason is the failing reed
Ye lean upon in mystery! Oh, deceive
The widowed heart no more, or it must grieve
O'er the cold ruin of its darkened shrine,
And, as it wanders, still behind it leave
Its godlike powers, high thoughts and hopes benign—
And the immortal Light that proved its birth divine!

XXVIII.

False as responses from Dodona's cave,
Or rude Telmessus, are the unearthly fears
That haunt the heart thro' being to the grave,
And change to agony outgushing tears;
Yet every changeful leaf and shadow bears
Some dim similitude of woes to come,
And lone reflection, like dark waters, wears
Life's life away—in peril of its doom—
Till the grieved spirit parts and wanders to its home.

XXIX.

The midnight churchyard and the lonely heath,
The o'erarched forest and the ruined tower,
Where stilly roam the images of death,
Where goblins gibber at the voiceless hour,
And strange appearances, like giants, lour
Thro' the dead darkness of the creaking wood—
Oh! these are seasons when the fiend hath power,
And places where he tempteth men to blood,
While madness springs from fear and stunning solitude.

XXX.

And these things, awful in their mystery, fill
The o'ercharged heart with horror past all speech,
And shoot thro' every vein a quivering thrill,
An awe that petrifies, beyond the reach
Of human healing; wisdom cannot teach
Knowledge, nor tame the terrors that will bear
The spirit into frenzy! Preach, oh, preach,
In zealot dooming to the empty air,
Ye ministers of men! then tremble in despair!

XXXI.

Reveal your mission! rend away the veil!
Tell us what 'tis we dread and what we are!
Cloud not the heart whose thickening pulses fail!
Doubt o'er us hangs, like a cold distant star,
That shows but darkness—truth abides afar,
None knoweth where; but are ye of the skies,
Yet cannot tear away the obstructing bar,
That shuts out knowledge? Light our groping eyes,
Or never more o'ercloud the eternal mysteries?

XXXII.

Where are we? Earth doth seem a hell afar
From the bright dwellings of the pure and high;

The darkened mockery of a cold dim star,
That, ages since, dropped from the glorious sky!
—What are we? Angels vouchsafe no reply,
And our own thoughts are but a maze of dreams,
That wrap us in delusion; the soul's eye
Is dimmed by doubt and dazzled by the gleams,
That flash from heaven o'er earth, like lightning o'er
dark streams.

XXXIII.

Why should we live to be the thrall of fears,
That sear the bleeding bosom? Why abide
Where Hope's frail flowers are watered by our tears,
Where passion riots on the wreck of pride,
And every joy is hurried down the tide
Of time to dim oblivion?—All is pain,
Our birth, life, death—and, onward as we glide,
We leave behind the things we love, full fain
To linger near past joys we shall not see again.

XXXIV.

Why such things are, earth never can reveal!
The canon of our doom hath found its close!
The dread Dispensers of our woe or weal
O'er earth and heaven—its angels or its foes—
Wander where'er the tide of being flows;
We know not, none know, where our path began
Nor where 'twill end! but while the blue sky glows,
And seasons bless our bosoms, still the ban
Of Evil doth not blight the moral heart of man.

XXXV.

Though branded by the taint of sin, and blurr'd
By the dire passions of our earthly lot;
Though upas envy in the soul hath stirr'd,
And dark revenge that cannot be forgot;
Though murder leaves its hecatombs to rot,

And bandit kings are Earth's Liege Lords of woe;
Yet there's redeeming beauty for the blot,
And blessedness, that, with a mellow glow,
Lights up the deepest stains that steep our hearts below.

XXXVI.

E'en as I write, old ocean's billows swell
And rush and roar around me, and the sun
Gleams o'er the Atlantic waters as they well
From the deep fountains of the depths; near done,
The summer eve sinks on the sea, and on
The gallant ship careers like hope to Heaven!
But all is mystery around; we run
A race with fate in darkness, and 'tis given
Our weary, fainting hearts to be asunder riven;

XXXVII.

Or worn, like rocky channels, till our life
Becomes an agony—a burning thirst,
A gasping fever—a Prometheus strife
With Destiny almighty from the first!
—Vain is the song that from the heart hath burst,
Vain is the incense of the poet's soul,
Vain deeds of glory blessed or accursed,
And vain the fruits of seasons as they roll,
If human hearts bow not to Him who guides the whole.

XXXVIII.

Dark the palazzo of the sunny south
To him whose spirit broods o'er wrong and ill;
Dark the fresh bloom of innocence and youth
To the chained victim of his own wild will!
Love's first warm gush and Joy's electric thrill
Stern passion changeth into bitter grief,
But meek contentedness abideth still,
And humble trust that is its own relief,—
The blossomed seed in spring—the golden autumn sheaf.

XXXIX.

Like twilight shed from treetops on blue streams,
The future shadoweth o'er the yearning mind,
That is a dim and dusky heaven of dreams,
Were high events are uttered by the wind;
Yet to a bosom humbled and resigned
Still there is Hope—high, holy hope, that soars
To realms the dervise never yet-divined,
Where seraphs wander by elysian shores,
And thronging World on World the Eternal One adores.

XL.

The lone heart looks and lingers and still yearns
To drink the bann'd cup of that awful lore,
Which dwells among the ashes of death's urns,
And is poured forth on that untravelled shore,
Whence parted spirits can return no more!
But, oh, the quest is vain; the burning thirst
Of knowledge never can be quenched before
The chains that bind the struggling spirit burst,
And the free soul departs to realize the worst.

XLI.

But well our searching thought these shapes may deem
These sheeted shadows and mysterious forms,
No strange creations of a feverish dream,
That come and vanish on the wings of storms,
But Spirits whom the fire of glory warms,
Who from the sepulchre of darkness come,
From the cold mansion of corroding worms,
To soothe the sadness of despairing doom,
And with a gentle love lead Earth's beloved home!

XLII.

Sweet messages of mercy may invite
Blest ones to wander mid their own loved kin,

That they may minister to their delight,
 And shield their hearts from error and from sin;
 So, by this hallowed commune, they may win
 Offenders from the path that leads to woe,
 And guide them where the holy enter in
 The heaven of heavens—the home that cannot know
 That sorrow, sin and death which visit all below.

XLIII.

O THOU! the beautiful, the loved, the lost,
 For whom unwonted tears are shed alone!
 Hear, thou of all on earth beloved the most,
 O hear my song beneath the eternal throne!
 To what far realm, fair sister, art thou gone?
 Where is thy dwelling with the purified?
 Hearst thou thy brother's deep and bitter moan?
 Cleanse thou his heart and check his human pride—
 The seraph be thou wert! that with thee I had died!

XLIV.

In the fresh bud of being thou wert swept
 From the glad earth and the rejoicing sky,
 And stranger hearts, o'ergushing, deeply wept,
 That one so blest and beautiful could die!
 Oh! many a bosom heaved its first low sigh
 O'er beauty's blight and genius' early doom,
 And, well do I remember, every eye
 Looked from the shadow of its mournful gloom,
 While Mary's lovely brow was darkened by the tomb.

XLV.

I would not thou wert here; earth is a cold,
 A cruel sojourn to the pure and mild,
 And none can long the sweet affections hold
 Of such as thou, blest sister, undefiled!
 But when in memory thine eye hath smiled,
 And thy voice came like songs from glory's sphere,

While I roamed sadly o'er earth's desert wild,
I oft have sighed to meet thee, sister dear!
Where thou art still the same as when our blessing here.

XLVI.

Thou, too, my father! ere thy son could catch
And paint thine image on his glowing breast,
Wert taken from thy skill'd and patient watch
O'er men by ills afflicted and distress,
To the lone chamber of thy silent rest!
I cannot well remember thee; there floats
A proud veiled image by me—half expressed;
An eye that bears the spirit it devotes,
A brow, a face, a form, but faint as sunbeam motes.

XLVII.

It is not oft thy name is uttered now,
For men are false to fame, and thou wert proud,
But some have told me that I bear thy brow,
And like thee move among the huddled crowd;
If thus it be, my father! though the shroud
Is dust upon thy heart, thy spirit still
Lives in thy firstborn boy, who hath avowed,
And will uphold the grandeur of thy will,
And, till the death decreed, thy great designs fulfil.

XLVIII.

It is a pleasant thought that thou mayst know
From all that live the person of thy son;
Yet I would not thou shouldst behold his woe,
But mark his ordeals passed—his trophies won—
Teach him to bear his trials, yet begun,
And follow Virtue—though a banished queen,
And Honour, where high deeds in youth are done,
Reckless of all that may be or hath been,
If it exalt us not above this grovelling scene.

XLIX.

Among the ancient hills of Warwick sleeps
A lake that mirrors the blue bending skies,
And round its waters lone the Mountain sweeps,
Whose pinnacles are thrones of destinies:
And by that sunny lake's green margin lies
A garden-plot choked up with poison weeds,
And in the midst a Ruin; there these eyes
First drank the beauty of a world that bleeds,
Amid its thousand charms, o'er Passion's evil deeds.

L.

And o'er a beetling crag a palmer bent
At that young hour—a wild and brain sick man—
And through the clouds of future being sent
His spirit: coal black was his hair, but wan
His lips that seemed to mutter o'er a ban.
He spake of sorrow and an orphan boy,
And widowhood in summer years began,
And guardian guilt and toil without a joy,
And yet a gifted Mind no trial could destroy.

LI.

That palmer's footstep prints no more the earth,
But his dim oracles were words of truth:
My sire—my sister—many a friend of worth
No more watch o'er my melancholy youth,
And kindred friends are few, and foes, in sooth,
Amid the mazes of earth's withering gloom,
Like scorpions crawl and pierce, with barbed tooth,
My heart, that dares the worst of evil doom,
And will not cower nor quail till shrouded in the tomb.

LII.

But happier thoughts and holier feelings wake,
And man may learn to seek his trust above,

Unawed by all the world can give or take,
 Confiding in the fountain of all love!
 Resigned and holy faith will ever prove
 The highest hope, the purest bliss—the best
 And only gift that nothing can remove!
 Lean thy sick heart on heaven and be at rest!
 Who early seek such strength will be for ever blest.

LIII.

Hold sweet communion with loved ones who sleep,
 Yet not unconscious of thy love and woe,
 In death's cold arms, yet in their bosoms keep
 Such high affection thou for them dost show!
 For thee their spirits still with young love glow,
 For thee they whisper in the evening wind
 Soft soothing words, that like blue waters flow;—
 “Though dead, our love yet lingers all behind—
 “For thee in heaven we dwell—be thou to heaven re-
 signed!”

LIV.

Reason is blind in mysteries revealed,
 And thought is folly o'er our destiny;
 The tree of knowledge unto all is sealed,
 Alike to worshipper and Sadducee,
 Alike to Muterin and Osmanlee;
 And faint and finite is the brightest gleam
 Of our chained spirits o'er Eternity;
 Wisdom must wait on fevered passion's dream,
 And solemn awe direct the thoughts we dare to deem.

LV.

We die with every friend that parts from earth,
 But live again with every soul whose home
 Is the blue ether. From our hour of birth
 Lost loved ones are around us, and they come

Into our thoughts, like moonlight, when we roam
In silvery silence 'neath the starlight sky;
They charm in grief, irradiate in gloom,
Impart meek gladness to the brow and eye,
And teach our weary hearts that spirits never die.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

WHAT awful images of ancient days,
What high and hallowed thoughts rush o'er my brain,
While I behold and tremble and adore
Thy melancholy pomp of sculptured Mind,
Thou Temple of the Deathless! Pantheon
Of Genius deified!—Amid thy vaults,
Thy lone religious passages and aisles,
Thy pillar'd arches gray and antique shrines,
The spirit pants for breath and the heart holds
Its lifepulse silent, for the undying Dead
Pour forth their glories here and all the air
Breathes of their immortality! We gaze
And gaze, and turn away, o'erpowered by thoughts
Vast as the blended intellects that float
Through the far cloisters of monastic gloom,
And high and holy as the eternal thrones,
Their seats of Power amid Earth's majesty!
How soars and shudders the astonished soul
Among the great assembly of the pride
And glory of the earth! the canonized
Of countless generations!—Here they dwell
Together—all the Majesty of Mind!
Bards of high mysteries! and warriors crowned
With gory glories! and wise statesmen skilled
To guide the golden argosy through storms
And tempests o'er a darkly swirling sea;
And orators, whose words of wisdom fell,
(Like the Athenian's eloquence among
The gurgling shores of rocky Salamis,)
Unheeded till too late! and here *they* sleep,
The mitred prelates of the land, whose ban
Was blight and blasting in the olden days,

When bondmen spirits, smitten to the dust,
Bowed down before the Dagon of their Faith,
Grasped the red cross, embraced a life of woe,
Adored a dream, and, like a vision, passed
To meet the doom of deeds before THE JUST,
Whom priestcraft never knew, or scorned, if known.
Beside the bold crusader sleeps the monk
Whose voice was like a trumpet, when he raised
The nations, and to the desert led them forth
To perish, like a herd on naked sands.
Here monarchs slumber—but unlawful hands
Have ceased to reverence the anointed head,
And crowns are crushed and sceptres broken now,
And not a voice cries *Traitor!* All is lost,
The pomp, the pageant and the banner'd pride,
The warrior's glory and the sovereign's power,
The churchman's bigot pride, the lady's charms!
St Edward's crown hath mouldered into dust;
The ancient chair for the anointing hour
Rests on the crumbled clay of those who, erst,
Sate proudest there—the Dagon of their day!
—Oh! nought is left but tombs and trophies now,
Dark mausoleums, where no empress weeps,
Shrines overthrown, where not a shadow steals
To worship—cenotaphs without a corse,
And monuments without memorial!

Oh! as I wander mid the holy light
Thrown from the pictured windows high aloft,
While every footfall, o'er the sculptured stones
Beneath, wakes ghostlike echoes, that along
The ancient walls steal with a low faint sound,
Like dim revealings of another world,
Each effigy dilates and glows with life
Around me, and the dusky light reveals
Their features like the faces we behold
In troubled visions, or the shadows seen

Gliding amid the gloamin, when the sound
Of flowing waters riseth on the soul
Like blessed music.—Ere they fade away,
Thus let me catch their wavering lineaments:—

Full in the sunset light far distant thrown
From yon stained window—lo! the Hero stands,
Whose voice shook empires! girt in iron mail,
With shivered shield and dinted sword, he stands,
And through the bars of his closed visor glare
His searching eyes like stars amid the storm.
His Anak form moves on—his armed tread
Tends to the battle or the tournament,
The foray or the joust—and hark! the shout,
'The bugleblast of onset!—All is still.
Behold again! where wars the giant chief?
—There—cold and motionless, the Statue stands.

Yon poet's marble brow breathes thought; his eyes,
To all the wonted wildness of their light,
Wake from the sleep of ages, and the love,
The passion of his spirit wakes again.
Lo! now he grasps his long neglected lyre,
And inspiration in his cold heart burns;
Memory, the seraph, from her pictured wings
Scatters gay visions o'er his wasted heart,
And Fancy, beautiful spirit! o'er him bends
With looks of light, and Forms, in robes of pearl
And green and gold, hover around his harp,
Redolent of joy and perfect blessedness.
—Alas! the golden chords melt 'neath his touch,
And the dust eddies in the troubled air—
Dust! nought but dust all that we love in life,
Like our own hearts, a dewdrop and a dream!

From his cold couch in yonder cloister's cell
The Monk starts up, as he were loitering late

From vesper hymn and hurries to his shrine
In the dark ruin of the chapelry.
Amazed, he stands; and, with a dreamy eye,
Like a delirious sleeper, gazes round;
The illumined missal and tall crucifix,
The waxlights and the censers, all have gone!
The altar-fire hath ceased! the worshippers
No more approach for earthly sacrifice;
The glorious beauty and high sanctitude
Of that fair church he served, e'en while he slept,
Hath passed away, like a bright evening cloud!

The Orator's pale lips, in quivering play,
Reveal the awful eloquence, that once
Shook thrones and sundered monarchies, but none
Heed now the voice, whose living magic held
The breathless heart submissive to its charm,
The strong delirious passions slumber on;
Hope dwells not here; Ambition hath forgot
His earth-o'ershadowing purposes; the spell
Of Praise, the fever of eternal Fame
Thrills not the silent soul—and hoary guilt
Hath passed the ordeal of its earthly doom.
How deadly still the Sepulchre of Pride!
The distant verger's faintest step o'ercomes
The spirit like the whisper of the Dead!
'Tis a sage homily—that slow light fall
Of living foot in this cold world of Death.

Why burns thine eye with such triumphant light,
O proud Elizabeth? Lo! there the shrine
Where worship now the people of the earth,
Scotia's lost Mary—beauty's loveliest queen—
A sacrifice, if innocent, and thrice
A sacrifice if guilt confirmed her doom.
Leman of Essex! Tyrant Henry's child,
Meet daughter of thy sire! bend that proud head

And look beneath thy foot, O haughty Bess!
Thy broken sceptre lies by Mary's tomb!
Grandeur! thou hadst thy crown. Misfortune now
Hath her reward—the tears of half the world.

The features fade to duskier lineaments,
The spell hath passed—and all becomes again
The monumental mockery—but oh!
'Tis a dread thing for living man to hold
Communion with this empire of the dead;
To think, to feel, to breathe a vivid life,
And know that every atom of the dust,
That mingles with the air, had thought and power,
And pillowed the same hopes on the same fears,
And toiled and struggled in the waves of woe,
Like the worn heart, that, old in early youth,
Poureth this dirge above the unanswering dead!
I hear the rush of countless wings; and now,
In solemn train and proud array, they pass,
The Great, the Wise, the Mighty and the Good,
Through the lone cloisters, and around the vaults
Spread the elysian vision of their pomp.
O'er hearts that quail and quiver, here they reign;
Throned on the majesty of ages here,
Triumphant Genius, from the thick pale dust
Invoking deities, eternal reigns,
While the bright suns, that lightened lower worlds,
Forever burn amid the heaven of heavens.

The old Cathedral clock tolls out the hour.
How solemnly each lone deep echo rolls
Through the cold World of Tombs! yet none awakes.
Ye effegies of glory and renown! ye shades
Of Mind! ye pictured palaces of Thought!
Hear ye that lingering knell?—'Tis not for you!
Listen, all ye who wander here! each note
Of that old prophet is the voice of death
Sounding—*Ye are the dust ye tread upon!*

For him, who, far from country, friends and home,
With a quick heart and a wrought spirit, roams
O Ancient Abbey! through thy pillar'd vaults,
When the dark fever of this life is o'er,
Far happier were the dying thought (as sweet
As breath of moonlight roses bathed in dew)
That he should lay his weary head to rest
On earth's green bosom, 'neath the smile of heaven,
Where sunlight and the beams of summer stars,
And the soft glory of the autumnal moon
And vernal showers and diamond dew would come,
And youths and maidens meet in joy and love,
Beneath the trailing willow and beside
The shorn turf of his nameless sepulchre,
Low in the violet vale, where mountains spread
The shadows of the eve—than that his corse
Should moulder in thy melancholy vaults,
Thou Sepulchre of Grandeur! where the sounds
Of multitudes commercing through the ways
Of Earth's one CITY-WORLD re-echo harsh
Along thy mouldering shrines and cloisters dim.

THE DWELLER OF THE ROCK.

I.

WHEN the solemn autumn days came on,
And the twilight shadows fell,
And the low winds sighed, with a lingering moan,
Through the depth of the hollow dell,
Mid the dark old woods, by Seekonk's stream,
With a quick and ghostlike tread,
A Pilgrim passed, like a shadowy dream,
Or a vision from the Dead.

II.

His form was bent and his brow was scarr'd,
But not by the brunt of years;
His eye was dimm'd and his manhood marr'd
By the blight of the heart's hot tears;
And a gloom, like that by the mountain cast
O'er the sunny vale of flowers,
Came wildly on from the vanished Past
To darken his future hours!

III.

Thou desolate realm of the sundered Mind,
When the world hath nought to give!
Voice to the deaf and light to the blind,
Yet a strength that bids us live!
When the hollow heart hath ceased to sigh,
And the burning eye to weep,
And darker storms are gathering nigh
And wilder waters sweep!

IV.

Like the wild wind o'er a lurid sky,
Like the dream of a stormy night,

Like a dark deed done when none are nigh,
Or guilt when it shuns the light,
Years had passed over that unknown man
In the depth of his cold abode,
And his brow bore the stamp of blight and ban,
And mystery tracked where he trode.

V.

In the jagged cave of the rock he dwelt
Where the eagles flap the air,
And none knew the deeds that he had dealt,
His glory or his despair—
For he moved like a ghost through the mazy wood,
And his words were few and cold,
And the heart was high that could cross his mood
As he stood in his mountain hold.

VI.

In the breezy bliss of the sunlight's sleep
On the green of the rolling mountains,
In the torrent's plunge and the tempest's sweep
O'er the depth of a thousand fountains,
By the cavern's mouth that lone man stood,
And his eye changed not its glare—
The gushing brook and the boiling flood
Were alike to his despair.

VII.

Without a friend or a hope to guide
His steps through the maze of woe,
He leaned on the spear of his failing pride
With a dark and haughty brow!
Like the asp, he had passed from flower to flower,
And gathered the bane of their bloom,
And his heart was the feast, from that dark hour,
Of the chill gnawing worm of the tomb.

VIII.

The rich light streamed through the forest-trees
And the voice of song went up,
And Music came by in the soul-like breeze---
--'Twas the dirge of the poison-cup!
His brow parted not from its pallid gloom,
On youth the deep shadow of years,
As he sighed for the sleep of the silent tomb,
Far from earth's follies and woes and tears.

IX.

Sometimes, he came to the haunts of men
For bread that he shunn'd to taste,
And amaze grew stronger and wilder then
As he passed away in haste.
--An outward form and an eye of flame,
A slow weak tread and a voice of woe,
Were all they knew, as he went and came
O'er the fair green earth and the desert snow.

X.

The rugged peaks of the rock point up,
And the Seekonk runneth yet,
But the Pilgrim hath drank his last dark cup,
And the sun of his woes hath set!
—In his cavern lay a Bible worn,
And a cross o'er a hallowed stone—
—Were it woe, or guilt, or a life forlorn,
Peace to the Pilgrim gone!

THE ALCHYMIST.

I.

DARK was the altar where he poured
The incense of his mighty Mind,
And dark the Power the sage adored—
The demon of the howling wind!
The Moloch deities of earth,
Companions of his vigils, came
At midnight, when proud thoughts have birth,
O'er his wrought soul, in shapes of flame.

II.

Around the sorcerer's shrine accursed,
They, gathering at the noon of night,
The mysteries of the earth rehearsed
In thoughts of bloom and words of light;
Unholy spells the depths revealed
Where secret treasures slept enshrined,
And o'er their vaults, by guilt annealed,
The sage bowed down his godlike mind.

III.

The metals of the mountain were
Earth's priceless diamonds unto him,
The gods whose power his soul could stir—
Spirits beyond the seraphim!
To them he sacrificed—to them
He offered up all human hope,
All human joys—man's diadem—
All faith in heaven—man's horoscope!

IV.

Mid crucibles and forges stood,
With a quick heart and soul wrought up,

The wizard, while the glittering flood
Rolled from the dark accursed cup;
And wildly glowed his evil eye
When the red gold before him fell,
Like stars poured from the glorious sky—
—Fool! 't is the tinsel hire of hell!

V.

Let thy brain work, dark Sorcerer! tear
The magic gems from hill and vale!
They light thee to thy last despair,
Thy mornless night of woe and wail!
For Earth is sacred on her throne
Of mystery and voiceless power,
And sacrilege, though stilly done,
Must meet a dread atoning hour.

VI.

Let thy brain work! thou dost search out
Engines of direst spell and power,
Hate, envy, havoc, sleepless doubt,
And woe—the wailing widow's dower!
Pour forth thy gold! for every smile
Of that red fiend the blood shall flow
O'er Earth's cold shuddering bosom while
Man loves to work his fellow woe!

VII.

Tear the dark mountain! search the sea
E'en to its coral depths of gloom,
Till the strong Legion are to thee
Liege Powers—victorious o'er the tomb!
Yet thou shalt languish o'er thy toil,
And clutch the vile unmoistened crust,
And, while thy metals burst and boil,
Hear spirits mutter spells accursed.

VIII.

Dash down the demon's tools! forbear
To brand the curse and seal the spell!
Leave the dark shrine of man's despair,
Or bid all earthly hope farewell!
—O Life's Elixir! Sophist's stone!
Gold wrought into an imaged god!
How long shall Earth lament and moan
The fiend let loose from her cold sod?

THE SPELL OF THE GLOAMIN.

'Tis a sweet eve in autumn! The blue sky
Of that blest season of the soul soars up
On its pure beauty, while the winnowing breeze,
Free from the charter of man's privilege,
Wanders where'er it listeth, o'er the earth,
Breathing the life of life o'er all that feels.
From the vast swell of sunset glory comes
A broad, deep, all-pervading gush of light;
A blaze of immortality, that bears
The spirit upward as on seraph wings,
That wave in the dim vision of our dreams.

O'er yon fair Isle of Sycamores—o'er all
The rugged Laurel mountains, whose dark cliffs
Pierce the deep azure and throw back their forms,
Uncouth and vast, against the sleeping sky,
Like the heroic warriors of old time
Reposing on soft bosoms;—o'er the woods,
That crown the toppling peak and down the vale
Sweep like a long array of visions past;
O'er the broad waters of Potomack, now
Slumbering in shadowy cavities, and now
Hurrying o'er arrowy shelves, like a proud steed
Appointed to the battle;—o'er the earth,
With all its beauties, and the bending heaven,
With all its glories, pours the godlike sun
His sea of light, and the ethereal heart mounts up
To catch the inspiration of his smile,
As a sweet child climbs to its father's bosom
To meet *his* kiss, whose blood through every vein
Rejoices, and whose eye reveals his soul.

The sunlight fades; the purple clouds assume
The changeful violet—the dusky rose,
The gray of mountain rocks; and now the breeze
Enters their twilight tents and they are gone
Where our thoughts vanish—where our hopes become
Phantoms of fear—where evening winds are born,
And parted souls depart!—Sage! canst thou tell?

In the deep hush of her solemnities
The crescent moon comes forth mid chequering clouds,
That o'er the aspect of her beauty throw
A picturesque romance—an ideal charm—
A visible music and an eloquence,
Like the deep pulses of the bosom heard
In forest-depths, when by the river bank,
And wooded hill and thymy valley sleep
The echo fairies and the water nymphs.
—Ye ties inscrutable, that link our hearts
To the deep solitudes of rock-barr'd dells,
And hoary hills and ever-flowing streams
And valleys breathing quiet! Let me catch
The spirit of your silent sanctity
And learn to bear the burden of men's talk
With an invisible though haughty scorn,
That, like a mirror, shows them what they are.—
Through sombre hanging woods, on either bank,
O'er tiny waterfalls, on right and left,
Down roars a mighty river, whose deep voice
Ascends in one eternal hymn of praise.
—Mysterious Life! whose evidence is Power,
Or in the voice that uttereth oracles,
Or in the solemn sound that hath no words,
Thou dost pervade all Nature; the deep sea,
The craggy mountain and the heart of man;
And art a glory—whether, from thy touch,
The insect's little wings of pictured hues
Float on the air, or whether, at thy voice,

The fearless eagle's sun-affronting eye
Marks out his prey;—alike thy power is felt
When the soft flame sheds blessings round the hearth,
And when the Volcan pillars midnight skies.—
Through skirting woods and sundered rocks sublime
The waters hold their turbulent career
Mid broken rocks and promontories high
O'erarching, since that hour of miracle,
When the vast Sea of their imprisoned waves,
Repellant at their bondage, in their strength
Rose up, and swept the mountain from its throne,
And to the ocean in their might went down,
Like Death to Armageddon's war of Doom.
How beautiful the moonlight (while we stand
On MONTICELLO'S Rock), upon thy stream
Bubbling in eddies, or in azure sleep,
Lifting its solemn music, or beside
The lofty bank reposing, while the trees
Scatter their sear leaves on its calm expanse!
How sweet to catch the hum of voices down
The peopled street—the mirth of happy hearts—
The blessed music of our daily life,
While the proud anthem of the waters swells
Upon the evening breeze, and forests join
The glorious hymn with melodies of leaves!

'Tis such a night as gentle hearts desire;
'Tis like the mellow courtesies of life,
A silent soother; and the low faint breeze
Steals through the firwood and the piny copse
With those deep, tender, solemn whisperings,
That stir the heart like music. From the sky
The stars look down with cheerly modest eyes,
That beam the truest oracles of joys
To gladden after years, so lovely now
That the worn heart no longer feels its woes,
Or discontent or dark-browed melancholy.

'Those miscreations and repugnancies,
'Those cold repellings of unuttered scorn,
'Those ingenuities of suffering,
That oft, in the thronged world, become a part
And portion of our being, enter not
'The mansions of the spirit, when it seeks
'The fountain-springs of life and drinketh there
'The waters of its purity, amid
'The still and hallowed sabbath of the heart.
Here let me linger, like a pilgrim far
From all he loves, and hold the feast of thought,
While jarring passions, like the desert winds,
Pass in the distance! let my heart resume
'The earlier kindness of its generous pulse,
And, stern to its own errings, render up
'The prayer of charity for all that breathe!
Here let me think how far from wisdom's path
And 'Truth's most pleasant places I have roamed,
And, with a heart of sorrow, look abroad
The world that sins when sin brings misery,
And peril, and a bitter bondage here,
And unacquainted woe in other worlds.

There is a time when sorrow on the soul
Hangs like the mortcloth on the shrouded Dead,
Deepening the darkness of death's mysteries;
When the barb rankles in the quickest depths
Of the dark bosom, and strange Shapes come forth
From Memory's pictured chamber to distort
And magnify our misery! But here
'The pale serenities of floating stars,
'The slumber of the solitary woods,
And the low gurgling gush of waters blue
Lift the glad heart into the realms of peace.

THE LOZEL.

I.

WITH a cold brow unblanched by shame,
A silent triumph of the eye,
A heart that spurns all honest fame,
And glories in its infamy,
Thou hurriest to the work of death,
The deeds that damn the soul the deepest,
And, coiling torture's serpent wreath,
Unstarting from thy visions, sleepest.

II.

Thy demon arts—thy smile that wears
The mask of love but to betray,
Thy crocodile, thy tyrant tears,
That gem thy victim's burning way,
Thy guarded glance, thy watchful care,
Thy passion shrinking at a word,—
All verge to one dark close—despair,
And ruin—destined though deferred.

III.

And thou canst sit by beauty's side,
And gaze on heaven's best image there,
And glut the rancour of thy pride
In thoughts that have no hope in prayer;
While she—her fair face lightened up
By Love that blooms like Eden's isle,
Drinks madness from thy poison cup,
And greets thee with a seraph smile.

IV.

Yes, thou canst blanch the virgin brow,
And dim the eye whose glance is bliss,
And steal what worlds cannot bestow—
Ay—steal with an Iscariot kiss!
And o'er thy blasted spirit breathe
No thoughts that would the wretch revive--
No pulse thrills through thy heart of death,
Whose throb would bid the ruined live!

V.

But, like the Samiel o'er the waste,
Thou leav'st a desert heart behind,
While Scorn smiles darkly o'er the Past--
The haunted ruins of the Mind!
And men will hear thee tell of deeds,
Whose lightest meed is years of pain--
A blighted heart that breaks and bleeds,
That ne'er can hope on earth again.

VI.

Amid the maddened revel's mirth,
When ribald tongues and maudlin eyes
Teach apes to scorn the sons of earth
Lost to their birthright in the skies,
Thy guilt becomes a deed of pride,
Thy victim's woe a theme of jest,
And thou canst woman's love deride,
Who art in woman's ruin blest.

VII.

Dishonoured and forsaken now
By all she loved in years gone by,
Gloom in her heart, guilt on her brow,
And darkness in her leaden eye,
She can but tread the appointed way
That all must tread on whom the world

Lays its forbidding curse for aye—
From love, hope, heaven and glory hurled!

VIII.

Deserted by the righteous throng,
Whose hearts are not so wholly changed
That they can shun the winning wrong,
If, unknown, from the fold they range,
Oh! what is left the victim maid,
Mocked by the vile, shunned by the good,
But sin continued—death delayed!
Blurr'd shame and awful solitude?

IX.

Ere life became a bliss to her,
Ere fragrance followed on the flower,
The spoiler came—the branded slur—
The deathless doom of frailty's dower!
And thus, DARK LOZEL! thou canst blight
The beautiful—and stain the fair—
And on her bosom pour the night
Of desolation and despair.

X.

By all the sorrows of thy lot,
By all thy wrongs in ruin borne,
By all heaven hath and earth has not,
By all thy utter woe and scorn,
The TRAITOR yet shall feel the force
Of all that long hath tortured thee,
'The conscious horror of remorse,
'The Ætna of life's agony!

XI.

Yes, he shall feel and thou shalt know,
In realms where guilt will find no gloom,

The peril of inflicted woe,
The anguish of the LIAR's doom!
—Thou hearst a Voice none else may hear,
It bids thy burning spirit pause;
It bids thee, INFIDEL! appear
Where Angels plead the Victim's Cause!

'THE LAY OF LOVE.

I.

WHEN through the dimness of the lonely night
Silence leans listening from the pale blue sky,
Amid the mysteries of the shadowy light
Of cypress groves that in the low winds sigh,
The shade of Death comes o'er my heart,
Like a dim dream of summer even,
And then I feel I could depart,
Like a sunbright cloud from the brow of heaven!
Without a sigh, without a fear,
Without a last lamenting tear,
A doubt to dim my spirit's bloom,
Or one lone shadow from the night of doom!

II.

Then Memory lingers o'er departed hours,
When Love, unstained by human passion, came,
Like starlight stealing through Arabian bowers,
The Spirit-Herald of a deathless fame!
But those are hours of sadness now,
Of vain repining and regret,
For Hope's fair sun hath left my brow—
The darkened light of love hath set!
Sweet Mary! like a tender dream,
A shadow on the rippling stream,
Thou liv'st alone in my clouded brain,
The vision of blest days that cannot dawn again!

III.

I roam to seek thee in the tufted grove,
The dim green wood, where purls that lonely stream,

Where erst, in commune soft, we loved to rove,
 Wrapt in the glories of Love's morning dream!
 Beneath thy bower, in starry gloom,
 I hear thy voice, whose music flows—
 —Oh! only from the midnight tomb—
 Like the fragrant breath of the morning rose!
 Chilled to the heart, I wake to weep,
 And sigh, alone, once more to sleep,
 That Illusion may weave her mystic spell
 Round the lone heart that hears the eternal knell!

IV.

Friends of my orphan youth, too well beloved!
 The true in heart, the tried in faith, the wise—
 Ye, wanting not, when long and deeply proved,
 In ought that breathes and blossoms in the skies!—
 I look around, but where are they?
 Like moonlight on the mountain, gone,
 Blest spirits! from their strife of day
 Up to their home round heaven's high throne!
 The pale cold stars smile on the scene
 Where life and hope and joy have been,
 While lowly they slumber, unsought, unknown!
 Beneath the rank green turf and sculptured stone.

V.

Fain would my thought in grief recur to thee,
 Lost lovely One! thou twin-born of my soul!
 Thy seraph smile, thy fawnlike step I see,
 Thy fair hair streams, thy blue eyes laughing roll!
 Oh! thou art here in all thy bloom,
 And blessedness of heavenly love—
 —Hark! that low voice as from the tomb!
 That moaning like the widowed dove!
 Death's shadow slumbers in her eyes,
 Cold, pale and still the victim lies,

Her spirit parts like an autumn even,
Her brow reveals the angel light of heaven!

VI.

The beauty and the bliss of days gone by
Deepen the darkness of the early doom,
That o'er the glory of my summer sky
Rolls from the deep recesses of the tomb;
Imagination's fairy dreams,
The bloom of beauty in the mind,
The blush of music-breathing streams,
Vanish—and leave reality behind!
I see no more the shapes of air,
Nymphs, dryads, oreads—angel things!
That threw abroad their golden hair,
And fann'd the blue heaven with radiant wings!
They are gone from me now,
Like the stars from the brow
Of the forest-crown'd hill, in the stillness of night—
And sullen sinks the blaze of all that magic light.

VII.

Cold on my shuddering soul the echoes fall
Of voices heard when every breath was joy:
Sere fall the leaves of youth's green coronal
Wreathed when high hopes were lighted at the sky!
Yet, like Tiresias—prophet old,
Or him—the Samian sage revered!
My o'erfraught bosom still may hold
The power and pride of things unfear'd,
And though my song may never be
What it had been, in days more free,
Yet its voice may soar above the grave,
Like low prophetic notes from old Trophonius'
cave.

S

VIII.

I could lie down on earth's green breast and weep
This weary, faint and hopeless life away,
And sink, at last, in death's undreaming sleep,
Like a fair child, tired of his tiny play;
For I have borne and still must bear
The burden of a heart that feels
Too deeply for the things that are—
A world that tortures or anneals!
And I would pass beyond their power,
Beyond the triumph of an hour,
Where my heart might catch the inspiring strain
Of bliss in worlds beyond the power of human pain!

MORNING ON THE THAMES.

I.

ALONE, from the dim watches of the night,
And the o'erpowering charm of thought intense,
I wander forth, beneath thy radiant light,
Thou Morn-Star of the world's magnificence!
That lifteth up the adoring heart to heaven
To render praise alike at morn and even!

II.

The hour is holy; man is not awake;
Angels alone can look upon me now;
Oh! it is rapture, as I walk, to take
A glance at heaven! upon my pallid brow
The fresh gale breathes and o'er my thirsting soul
Gleams of fair light and bursting beauty roll.

III.

Old river of renown! thy waters flow,
As they have flowed since ancient time was young,
Unconscious of the countless years of woe
That into being on thy shores have sprung;
Men's woes cast not their shadows on thy stream—
Men's passions dim not morning's rosy beam!

IV.

Stillness pervades the universe and throws
A charm o'er earth, which noise and sin and strife
Too soon will break. Like odour from the rose
The air floats now, instinct with love and life
And redolent of bliss; but man will wake—
O'er all things creeps the venom of the snake—

V.

'The snake that will not die till death is dead,
That stings and stings forever! oh, that Peace
Would visit earth! too long the heart hath bled!
Mercy! vouchsafe the sons of earth release!
Her early joys awhile to earth restore
Ere darkness wraps the world forever more!

VI.

'Through the grey vapours of the morning loom
The gallant ships of merchandise and war,
Careering onward to their utter doom
In realms where burns the pestilential star—
Where human life is like the trampled sod,
A sacrifice unto the mammon god.

VII.

'Ten thousand eyes will see their home no more!
Lo! how they vanish on the ocean blue!
'The White Cliffs fade--their long loved island shore,
And the vast deep wears one unchanging hue.
Farewell! by Burrampooter's desert wave
Mysterious hands dig many a soldier's grave!

VIII.

Beneath Bundoolah's red avenging sword,
In the dark valley of the Arracan,
Heroes shall fall who call Ambition lord,
And riot in the spoil of vassal man,
And Famine march, with a triumphant tread,
O'er the unburied army of the dead.

IX.

Since the first man first mid the wild flowers trod
Of Eden, on the day 'The Ban went forth,
Woe hath appealed in ceaseless cries to God,
While giant Crime stalked o'er the shuddering earth,

And nations rolled their banners in the blood,
That still flows on, like dark Missouri's flood.

X.

Dominion, power, accursed gold hath been
The wacry and the watchword since the hour
That demon passions blasted all the scene,
Banding their phalanx 'neath tyrannic power;
And thus it must be; still the wail mounts up,
And man must drain the dregs of horror's cup.

XI.

Dim grows the eastern fleet; on, on to death!
Ye seek ye know not what in foreign lands!
Go—for your Asian pomp and barter breath
And call it glory!—O'er the yellow sands
They vanish;—the horizon, faintly blue,
Sinks on the ocean void! a last adieu!

XII.

Old Thames! dark memories linger on thy shore
Of power acquired by sacrilege and blood,
And large dominion lost for ever more
Where the true temple of thy glory stood,
Throned on the greatness of thy wedded isles,
Where Ocean lifts his aged brow and smiles!

XIII.

And many a wild lament and dying scream
Hath swept along thy gusty waters, when
His country's friend, like hope's expiring beam,
Hath fled where freedom is the breath of men,
Leaving the herd, that wait the tyrant's will,
To howl anathemas on Tower-Hill.

XIV.

High minds have sunk—high hearts have broken here—
Thy banks are eloquent in human woe!
Methinks, the spectres of pale silent Fear,
And shuddering Grief stalk by me as I go,
Revealing, in their fixed, soul-trembling eyes,
The crushing horror of Earth's sacrifice.

XV.

Pass on! farewell! and let my praises rise
That this is not the Land which I must name
MY COUNTRY!—Far, beneath more genial skies,
The Monarch-Nation reigns—their throne is fame!
There let me turn, while here I roam afar,
And higher glories catch, than thine, O Morning-Star!

THE FOREST KING.



DEDICATORY SONNET,

TO GENEVIEVE.

Woe hath not been a stranger to thy heart,
Yet thy fair spirit breathes the purest love,
For strength on thee hath fallen from above
To bear all ill and deepest bliss impart!
Love! thou hast cheered me in my darkest mood,
And loved me most when most severely tried,
And shall I not commend thee, my heart's bride?
Light, charm and beauty of my solitude!
The strain thy spirit drank ere I had brought
The forest legend to a darkened close,
Accept! a tale of Love's too common woes
Beneath the starlight of thy sweet smile wrought!
Linked with thy Love, so holy and so high,
My fame may not like summer music die.

CHRISTMAS EVE, 1827.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Near the present town of Tallahassee, in Florida, the ruins of forts and very considerable cities, roads, and bridges, evidently constructed with great art, are distinctly visible; and, connected with these venerable memorials of former grandeur, legends of ancient greatness, unbounded power, conquest and battle are related by those Indians who have dwelt near the spot.

The outline of this tale is a fact of oral history; the details are necessarily fictitious. It is easy to trace among the ruins vestiges of terrific destruction—the unsparing havoc of long protracted, but finally triumphant vengeance; but the actors in this tragic scene have been the suggestions of imagination—however imperfectly represented.

THE FOREST KING.

I.

LONG ere the voice of Albion's sons was heard
'Mid the lone forests of the distant West,
Where the wild winds alone the woodlands stirr'd,
Breathing around the ringdove's peaceful nest,
And bright flowers bloom'd on nature's virgin breast
Perfuming heaven—pluck'd by no wayward hand—
The brave Norwegian found a place of rest
Far tow'rd the winter's sun, with his faint band,
In a soft sunny clime and ever fruitful land.

II.

The charm and beauty of his forest home
Lull'd memory into slumber soft and still,
For here the wanderer gladly ceas'd to roam,
And rear'd his cottage 'neath the verdant hill.—
Oh, all is peace when man doth curb his will,
And bear resigned the evils of his lot,
Intent on virtue through all mortal ill.—
Torn from his birthplace, which was not forgot,
Yet Norway's son toil'd on, and griev'd or murmur'd not.

III.

The Indian hover'd round the hamlet rude,
And look'd askance, yet seemed not to admire;
Nought pass'd unseen the monarch of the wood,
But his cold eye conceal'd his spirit's fire;
Too proud to question, all strange things inspire
The child of nature with emotions high,
And while in chase his strong limbs never tire,
His free soul ranges o'er the glorious sky,
Burning with lofty thoughts that cannot fade or die.

IV.

The red man gaz'd and wonder'd and came near
And smok'd his calumet of peace, and Love
Flourish'd uncheck'd by interest or fear
Between the strangers in the piny grove;—
The Natchez came and went, and ever strove
By silent truth to win unbought regard.
Time pass'd as on the pinions of a dove,
And white and red commingled, and the bard
Sung round the banquet board the love that all things
shared.

V.

Young Leon, son of him who led the way
O'er the dread wave, was chief of Yamasee,
And proud and beautiful as bright-eyed day
And brave and godlike as the lion, he;
O'er his high brow his long dark hair waved free,
His form was lithe and strong as mountain vine,
And fearless warriors bow'd the stubborn knee,
Awed and o'erjoyed whene'er his eye divine
Flash'd forth the battle's light or bless'd the holy shrine.

VI.

His wild black charger arth'd his neck and neigh'd,
And bent his knee and bow'd his battle breast
When Leon's voice came echoing from the glade;
Yet, at a check, he paus'd in watchful rest
Where maddening foes in fiercest havoc press'd,
When, through the tempest and unearthly roar
Of slaughter, waved the chieftain's sable crest;
And on the mighty horse his hero bore,
Like the black steed of death on Hades' desert shore.

VII.

Yet kind and gentle was the man of fear,
And mercy's infant voice and pity's sigh

O'ercame proud Leon in his dread career
 And turn'd to bloom the lightnings of his eye,
 As rainbows beam when storms are on the sky;
 None suffer'd unaveng'd—no lying tongue
 Blasted fair fame and bade the victim die—
 But penal vengeance on the felon sprung,
 And on his branded brow the liar's emblem hung.

VIII.

Though Valour bore his proud, undaunted part,
 Yet Leon's eye beheld all civil wrong;
 Dear to the chief the empire of the heart
 As trophied conquest with his clarion song;
 No fame could spare the oppressor, howe'er strong,
 No splendour shield a wanton deed of guilt;
 King of the Poor! his fearless chiefs among
 None dar'd imbrue his sabre's burnish'd hilt
 With guiltless blood, in hate or midnight riot spilt.

IX.

Many were Leon's chiefs and high their name
 For gallant prowess on the barbed steed;
 But slumber'd now the terror of their fame,
 For war's great sacrifice had ceas'd to bleed,
 And peaceful love was all the hero's creed.
 To solemnize this brotherhood of soul
 Kings were assembling from the hill and mead,
 From the far Oregon and snowy pole;
 And Leon spread the feast and fill'd the mantling bowl.

X.

The gorgeous glory of the evening sky
 Crimson'd with purple hues the mountain wood,
 And pour'd o'er earth from sunlight founts on high
 Voluptuous radiance in a diamond flood;
 Each dew-lipp'd shrub and leaf and floweret stood
 Gemm'd with rich jewels of the heavenly flame,

And bright birds flew and sung in rapture's mood,
 And wild deer forth with arch'd necks, bounding, came,
 And drank the rosy air and leapt around their dame.

XI.

Round Tallahassee, city of the sun,
 Luxuriant groves and blooming gardens lay,
 And happy groups, when twilight shadow'd dun,
 Linger'd and watch'd the hallow'd close of day
 And thought of friends or lovers far away,
 Or sung in mirthful strains their coming bliss;
 And the soft fragrant airs, in dallying play,
 Flew o'er the bowers they ever lov'd to kiss,
 And then to other worlds soar'd gayly on from this.

XII.

Now, more than ever, radiant throngs were seen
 Of beauty blessing the heart's sacred hour;
 And sun-eyed warriors, o'er the meadows green,
 Came seeking bliss in true love's vesper bower,
 Fearing, each step, who fear'd no other power;
 And blessed hearts were blending all around
 Leon's proud palace and embattled tower,
 Where sunbeams glowed when glimmering twilight
 crown'd
 The dusky vale and hung o'er all the hilly ground.

XIII.

Floridian maids! oh, what a magic glance
 Gleams from your eyes, where all the heart's light
 burns!
 The rich, dark beauty of that countenance,
 Which each high thought and passion shows by turns!
 Fair cheeks, as cold and still as death's own urns,
 May bloom and wither like a pictur'd face,
 But the dusk glory of the spirit spurns
 The painter's art; no tint can mark the trace
 Of the outpouring soul—the heart's ideal grace.

XIV.

Ye southern flowers! dark with excess of light!
On Leon's festal eve, your radiant bloom
Seem'd kindled at the glory of the night,
And shrin'd in heavenly music and perfume.—
Ah! what bright paths lead to the dark cold tomb!
What gladness lights the cheek when death stands
near!
Life's holiest loves and fondest joys illumine
The vale of death to show all shapes of fear,
Which to the maddening soul in awful throngs appear.

XV.

Amid the shadowy dimness of the scene
Tall warrior forms were moving to and fro,
And wrath and pride, o'ermask'd by looks serene,
Shook many a heart that had not learned to bow;
And awful was their tread so sternly slow,
And dread the lightning of their uprais'd eyes,
Where thoughts of other days but burned to throw
The gloom of shame o'er all their weak emprise,
Since they had crouch'd beneath prince Leon's destinies.

XVI.

Unbounded is thy talismanic power,
O Art! proud genius of the searching mind!
Thou canst achieve that glory in an hour,
Which leaves long centuries of toil behind;
To earth's dull clods—to treacherous wave and wind
Thou canst impart a force to kill or save,
And, like Æolus, winds in durance bind.—
Oh, think if Heaven this skill so potent gave
To chain the swelling heart and make the soul a slave.

XVII.

Arm'd with thy power, proud Leon had o'ercome
The forest kings for thousand leagues around;

And haughty spirits ill obey'd their doom,
Thus unto tribute and sore slavery bound;
But few 'mid all in bondage could be found
Daring to break the burden of their yoke,
For Leon's wacry bore an awful sound,
And when the monarch into anger broke,
Death fell on quailing hearts with every flashing stroke

XVIII.

Lords of the woods, they long had roam'd where'er
Their simple nature's sovereign will did guide,
Brav'd the wild torrent, chas'd the bounding deer,
Pierc'd the mail'd crocodile, and, in his pride,
Brought down the condor;—but the ebbing tide
Of wayward fortune left them when they dar'd
Prince Leon's warriors, and their bravest died
In the hot strife, and the poor remnant shar'd
The conquered's suppliant lot with spirits ill prepar'd.

XIX.

But treachery and bloodshed and vain oaths
Had maddened the proud Lord of Yamasee;
And all the faithful heart for ever lothes
Conspired to swell the tide of victory;
Ambition might have left the Indian free,
But justice, long outraged, o'ercame all ruth,
And battle raged as earth no more shall see,
Till conquest chained the faithless race to truth,
And Leon ruled the West in all the pride of youth.

XX.

The feast is spread in Leon's vaulted hall;
The forest kings move on with haughty tread,
That spurns the dust and scorns to be the thrall
Of measured pace; and every sound hath fled
As that dark throng were phantoms of the Dead;
Far through the blazing hall the chiefs appear,

Mantled and sandalled, and each high-plum'd head
Bears loftily its woes without a tear,
Though each unwilling guest is but a vassal here.

XXI.

Silent as vengeance meditating death,
Each chief glides on to his allotted place;
Each hollow arch returns the deep-drawn breath,
The quivering gasp—the panting of disgrace.
So still the hall, where lords of every race
Meet to adorn the triumph of their host;
What dark revenge can such deep shame efface?
What can redeem the soul of honour lost?
Return, ye warrior dead! fulfil your living boast!

XXII.

Proud Leon marked yet seemed not to behold
The inward struggle and the lowering brow,
Where the heart's tempest gathered, fold on fold,
Charged with electric fire. “What wait we now,
“My fellow warriors of the wildwood? How!
“Ye wrong my banquet!” and the dauntless chief
Bade them admire the glory and the show
Which their own tribute wrought—and, for relief,
Gaze on the uphung bows—memorials of their grief!

XXIII.

The huntsman's spoils—the riches of the wood,
High branching antlers, spotted skins and blue,
And white and crimson plumes—and, from the flood,
Bright colour'd shells, sea-sounding, meet the view,
Varied in every shape and every hue;
And Leon's eye in exultation glows
As when the trumpet of his victory blew,
While fierce despair frowns on his vassal foes,
Too weak to strike alone—too proud to bear their woes.

XXIV.

The lengthening hall is carpetted with fur—
Red torches glare along the embattled walls;
The summer airs in gentle whispers stir
The flaring blaze, that shadows where it falls;
On high the warder to his fellow calls,
And the hoarse accents echo through the tower,
And wake in lonely vaults and distant halls
Such spirit moans as warn the approaching hour
Of wrath, that rends away the monarch's pride and power.

XXV.

First in his honours, in his presence last,
On came the hoary chief of Oregon;
Glory had crowned him once, but that was past;
His pride still bowed not, but his hope had flown,
And left him, powerless, in the world alone;
Oh, not alone with thee, his heart's delight!
Thou round the scathed tree, like a flower full-blown,
Didst cling when winter came with withering blight,
And storm and blast howled through the lonely lingering
night.

XXVI.

Bright rose of Oregon! how beauty fills
The panting bosom when revered old age
Leans on its saintlike loveliness! how thrills
The lone heart weary of its pilgrimage,
When angel charms in angel acts engage,
And throw the rainbow of delighting love
O'er the dark tempest of life's latest stage,
Faithful to death! oh what can stronger prove
That woman's starlight soul flowed from the fount above?

XXVII.

How lovely was that daughter of the Wild,
How wav'd her hair and spake her soft blue eye,

When like a star on human things it smil'd,
'Tis not my mood to picture; from the sky
That beauty comes which wings the soul on high;
Kind words and gentle deeds far more adorn
Than charms that dawn and blossom but to die;
Vain is the triumph which but leads to scorn—
Young Immalie was like a dewy springtime morn!

XXVIII.

And she had follow'd where her king-sire led,
Cheering his way with tales of other days,
And waking feelings long since lost or dead,
By arts which woman only knows; rude lays,
Old legends, varied in a thousand ways;
But nature's leaven blends with holiest things,
And robs high deeds of all their highest praise;
Ill would that maid have borne long wanderings
Had Leon's love not lent her gentle spirit wings.

XXIX.

With brimming cup uprose Prince Leon now.—
“Lords of the Nations! in this hour of mirth,
“When peace and love smile o'er each joyful brow
“And bliss attends the cabin's hall and hearth,
“Your true ally craves all he hopes on earth,
“The maid of Oregon! his home is lone,
“His empire vast; his heart is parch'd with dearth;
“Give me a bride to share my bosom's throne—
“Give me a Queen—yon bright, yon lov'd and loving
one!

XXX.

“Health to the Bride!” But silent as the grave,
Each stranger chief eyed him of Oregon;
Then each looked down and felt himself a slave
To the high will and dauntless power of one;
Then spake the sire, in wild, unearthly tone—

"Where be thy captive pledges of our truth,
 "Lord of the Wild?"—Prince Leon stood alone
 'Mid that wild throng who knew no gentle ruth,
 But lightnings robed his eye, and proudly spake the
 youth;

XXXI.

"Thou knowest me not, hoar chief! thy wily tribe,
 "Thrice pierc'd my side ere battle blow was dealt,
 "And Creek and Choctaw kiss'd thy faithless bribe,
 "E'en when thy stubborn knee in homage knelt;
 "Thou should'st not draw a bow nor wear a belt
 "Again, false chief! but years are on thy head,
 "And vengeance sleeps! I feel as once I felt,
 "And now would o'er thy age and sorrow spread
 "The youthful light of love—the charm of years long fled.

XXXIII.

"Thou hear'st, hoar chief!"—Slow rose the ancient
 man,
 Erect as in his youth, nor dim his eye;
 "The oak of thousand years," the chief began,
 "Bows not to every wind that hurtles by;
 "Flowers of my race beneath another sky
 "Bloom not, but wedded to the parent vine,
 "Flourish unblighted; brothers, let us fly!
 "Well the dark spirit guards false Leon's shrine,
 "But his o'erbearing pride shall wed no child of mine."

XXXIII.

Prince Leon stamp'd and warriors filled his hall,
 Dark in their mail'd array. "Mock not the storm,
 "Or dread the thunderbolt of wrath should fall,"
 Cried the stern King of Yamassee—his form
 Towering amid his legions. "Crush the worm—
 "Touch not the talons of the eagle! Go!
 "Ye are my guests—go safely forth and arm

“Your tribes and plot my utter overthrow;
“But Immalie abides and shares my weal or woe!”

XXXIV.

The banquet-hall is lonely; prints of strife
And rude disorder and wild disarray
Bear witness to a scene with horror rife—
A desperate grappling and a fierce affray.
But silent dawns the orient light of day,
And stillness slumbers upon earth and heaven,
Save when the song-bird pours its roundelay,
Grateful, poor thing! for many mercies given,
And pouring forth its praise at dewy morn and even.

XXXV.

O'er the sheen mirror of the dark blue bay,
That murmured round the city of the Sun,
Trembled in gleams the gushing blaze of day,
Like heaven's bright gates when paradise is won;
Night's shadows waned away o'er woodlands dun,
And quivering dew-drops hung like gems on high,
And the clear air in living currents run
O'er all the earth and all the rosy sky,
And filled the heart with love where'er it murmured by.

XXXVI.

“Bride of my bosom!” said the forest lord,
Bending before the first love of his youth,
“Forgive my daring deed—my harsher word!
“Thy taunting sire belied my soul of truth;
“Had not thy beauty pleaded, love, in sooth,
“He had not pass'd the gates of Yamasee,
“But he hath gone in o'erindulgent ruth,
“And thou art mine whate'er the issue be;
“Bride of my heart! my empire centers all in thee.

XXXVII.

Daughter of earth! hast thou e'er felt the might,
The eloquent pleading of strong love, and sought
To quell by reason thy most true delight?
Hast thou long pictured, in thy mirror'd thought,
The lovely image of the loved, and wrought
From golden fancies realms of light and flowers,
And heard stern duty telling thee that ought
Unfilial led to sad repentant hours—
Oh, hast thou fled from love and rapture's rosy bowers?

XXXVIII.

Blame not sweet Immalie! her heart had long
Found all its pleasures in a distant clime,
And years had flown since she in forest song
Had told her love at the sweet evening time;
She was too pure to dream of sin or crime,
Too blest to feel that love could be unblest,
And every eve her soul had soared sublime
To the great Spirit from her inmost breast,
That Leon's path might lead where good men's feet had
press'd.

XXXIX.

And now 'mid tears of filial sorrow shone
The radiant smile of long devoted love;
And the brave chief gaz'd on the lovely one,
As the proud eagle gazes on the dove—
Lord of the air and beauty of the grove!
And Leon felt the galling penance light,
Ne'er 'gainst her sire his warrior skill to prove,
But spare the foes who dar'd him to the fight,
And leave a stain upon his fame's immortal might.

XL.

Lord of the Wood! fair maid of Oregon!
Your fate is one—your fortunes are the same;

And grav'd for ever on the eternal throne
Your bridal vows of truth—your blended name;
Sweet is the incense of a virtuous fame,
And sweet the mingling of enamour'd souls,
Be your's all joys the sinless heart may claim
'Till—hark! the alarum knell at midnight tolls,
And on the silent air a cry of battle rolls!

XLI.

Lift high war's banner to the morning gale!
Raise the loud warcry through strong Yamassee!
Legions are thronging from a thousand ways,
And bird and beast from their close coverts flee;
There is no sound of death, but every tree
Hides the sure arrow and the bended bow,
And glaring eyes, O Leon! fixed on thee,
Mid the dark woods, like serpent's, flame and glow,
And battle-axes gleam, instinct to deal the blow.

XLII.

Look from thy tower with watchful eye and note
Each gate and portal as thy life were in't;
Guard well the drawbridge and the broad, deep moat,
For even there the foe hath left his print!
Oh, direful is the Indian's battle dint,
And dark and wily is his hidden path;
Of serpent wiles and snares his brain 's a mint—
He brings a fear no other focman hath,
And worse than hell doth lour the rancour of his wrath.

XLIII.

Time wears apace, and vainly Indian power
Hurtles frail arrows in impotent ire;
Still frowns unscath'd the Yamassean tower,
Its loopholes gleaming with consuming fire;
But hopes of vengeance yet the tribes inspire,
The patient hope that in the Indian's breast

Can never but with some dark deed expire;
Cold, famine, danger, perils unexpress'd
He doth endure unchang'd to be in slaughter blest.

XLIV.

A thousand fires blaze on the dark midnight—
Ten thousand forms around them crouch or stand,
And all are weary of the bootless fight
With walls that move not 'neath a mortal hand,
While the red shot sweep down the naked band
Beneath the ramparts of the frowning tower,—
Quick baffled hatred tires of bow and brand,
And bans the hoar chief and the banquet hour,
Quailing before the warrior monarch's awful power.

XLV.

The Oneidas, Hurons, Mohawks—all have fled;
The Creeks and Choctaws follow on their way;
The watchfires wane around the unburied dead,
And the fierce Delawares have quit the fray.
“Pause yet!” the hoar chief cries—“awhile, oh, stay!
“Abide the last wile of my cunning—now!”
High blaze the council-fires like light of day,
And, 'mid their bright and all-illuming glow,
The leaguering host pass on and through the forest go.

XLVI.

For many a night, upon his lonely tower,
Leon had watch'd the foe, and toil and care
And grief, indulg'd through many a midnight hour,
Nature no longer nor his soul could bear;
And on the bosom of his true love there,
In his high tower, repos'd the forest chief,
And Immalie bent o'er her face so fair,
And sought in song that rapture, howe'er brief,
Which sooth's unquiet sleep and stills the pang of grief.

XLVII.

"Thy head is pillow'd on my bosom now,"
 Thus, in a dovelike whisper, murmur'd she,
 The gentle queen; "and on thy lofty brow,
 "Where gleams the glory of thy majesty,
 "I gaze unseen, the worshipper of thee,
 "Spirit of warrior beauty! those shut eyes,
 "That read the souls of mighty Yamasee,
 "Gleaming like stars in late autumnal skies,
 "Behold me not as thus I bid my worship rise.

XLVIII.

"War for my sake—the cruel war of death
 "Weighs heavy on thy mind, beloved one!
 "E'en now thou draw'st thy short and hurried breath
 "As if the slaughtering battle were begun,
 "And thy lips quiver as the fight were won,
 "And the loud shout of victory were thine;
 "Oh, how can I in anything atone
 "For all the ills I've wrought thee? how untwine
 "The serpent maze of thought that wraps thy soul divine.

XLIX.

"Oh, could I share the battle's fiery bliss,
 "And wield thy sword—not 'gainst a father, no!
 "But all thy *other* foemen—with a kiss,
 "I would uplift thy banner o'er the foe,
 "And bear it through red havoc's dreadful glow,
 "Reckless of all things else so thou wert near;
 "For 'tis the nature of true love to know
 "Nought but the form, whose very shadow's dear,
 "And follow on his path through every mortal fear.

L.

"Sweet slumber seals thine eyelids; would I knew
 "That peace were in thy heart! thy spirit's eye

“ I fear me, never sleeps, but bright and true,
“ For ever ranges through the earth and sky,
“ Hovering delighted near its home on high;
“ Oh, wake not now! why that convulsive start,
“ As if thou heardest far-off the battle-cry?
“ The spell of care lies heavy on thy heart;
“ When will the mournful hours of harrowing fear de-
part?

LI.

“ Once more sleep on my bosom, god of war!
“ Ah, canst thou feel the throbbings of my love?
“ The dazzling radiance of thy glory’s star,
“ Though brighter far, will not so faithful prove.”
—Lo! sudden fires illumine yon fir-tree grove,
And swimming shadows, ’mid the murky glare,
In wrathful attitudes commingling, move;
And hark! a fearful wailing of despair!
“ Wake, Leon, wake! the foe in all his might is there!”

LII.

Prince Leon sprung—rush’d from the midnight tower,
Leapt the broad moat, and vaulted on his steed,
And thunder’d on amid an arrowy shower,
Where thousands fought as heaven were their meed;
Before the gale as bows the fragile reed,
So shrunk stern warriors from his charger’s shock;
His sabre seemed with thousand hearts to bleed,
None dar’d in fight that dragon crest to mock,
But on, unscath’d, he rush’d like crushing mountain rock.

LIII.

His warhorse caught his king’s heroic thought,
And seem’d instinct with thousand lives—the air
Bickering with poison’d arrows—but he fought
Like madness vanquishing the heart’s despair,

While Leon still, amid the gory glare
Of his proud city, kept his kingly way,
Reeking with blood, like one whose only care
Was now to leave dire trophies of his sway,
Vast hecatombs to burn upon his dying day.

LIV.

The foe retires—the city 's robed in flame—
The tower stands dark—the warder hath not fled;
“Where be my warriors of undying fame?”
Cried Leon. “There!” the warder answer'd. “Dead!
“All dead, brave spirits! yet once more!” he said,
And vanish'd into gloom—the gloom of blood;
But still was heard his courser's thundering tread,
And sabre-strokes far through the gloomy wood,
And shrieks came on the breeze where Leon's empress
stood.

LV.

With crimson breast and neck of thunder came
The sable charger, bath'd in gory dew;
Feebly he struggled on, 'mid smoke and flame,
And spurn'd the dead with his red hoof as through
The dead and dying, he rush'd on and drew
Near Leon's tower—then, with a faint low neigh,
He fell and died, yet to his monarch true,
The last light of that eye, whose guiding ray
Had led his rider safe, still gleam'd as in the fray.

LVI.

Lord of the Wild! thou stoodst amid the blaze
Of thy vast city on that night of doom,
Not as the Gallic chief, in later days,
Stood in the kremlin; mid the glare and gloom
Of fiery seas of blood thou foundst thy tomb,
Among the ruins of thy warrior race—
Among thy slaughter'd foes, and earth lack'd room

For all the dead; their final dwelling place
Was where thy name survives in battle and in chase.

LVII.

'The volum'd flames wane in the morning sun,
And havoc sickens in his feast of gore;
But where is Leon? When his course was done,
No mortal eye beheld the hero more;
No flight was seen on wilderness or shore,
But Immalie had gone and long her sire
Cried vainly for his child. Years linger'd o'er
And lonely burn'd his cheerless cabin fire,
But she return'd no more to gladden or inspire.

LVIII.

'Traditions vague as oral tales of eld
Roll dimly down the troubled sea of Time,
Like shadowy spirit barques, that long have held
Their swift career from soft to savage clime
Through storm and surge—a vision dark sublime!
Legends, like mists around the mountain's brow,
Rise, spread and hover o'er the field of crime!
But o'er the sky no sun goes forth to show
What awful mysteries sleep upon the vale below.

LIX.

Gray-headed grandsires to their spell-bound boys
Tell a wild Tale of treason; on that night,
Ere mid the host was heard King Leon's voice,
Ere his arm check'd the torrent tide of flight;
An ingrate renegade, for fancied slight,
Betrayed the glorious city of the Sun:
But, ere the dawning of the morning light,
Ere Leon half his last career had run,
'The headless traitor fell where giant deeds were done.

LX.

Fame tells, strange sounds upon the battle morn,
Were heard on Leon's castellated tower;
Sounds indistinct like those of deep love born
In lone communion at the midnight hour;
And in the gray dawn, round the lost queen's bower,
Quick as wild flashes from the electric sky,
The deep bay trembled to its farthest shore,
'Tis said, and something shadow'd from on high,
But darkness shrouds the scene—all, all were born to die

HOUSEHOLD HOURS.

—Women's hearts
Are treasures well worth miracles to keep.

Croly

I.

Howe'er the sceptic scoffs, the poet sighs,
Hope oft reveals her dimly shadowed dreams,
And seraph joy descends from pale blue skies,
And, like sweet sunset on wood-skirted streams,
Peace breathes around her stilling harmonies,
Her whispered music,—while her soft eye beams—
And the deep bliss, that crowns the household hearth.
From all its woes redeems the bleeding earth.

II.

Like woods that shadow the blue mountain sky,
The troubled heart still seeks its home in heaven,
In those affections which can never die,
In hallowed love and human wrongs forgiven!
From the fair gardens of THE BLEST on high
The fruit of life is yet to lost man given,
And mid the quiet of his still abode
Spirits attend him from the throne of God.

III.

The mild deep gentleness, the smile that throws
Light from the bosom o'er the high pale brow
And cheek that flushes like the May-morn rose;
The all-reposing sympathies, that grow
Like violets in the heart, and o'er our woes
The silent breathings of their beauty throw—
Oh! every deed of daily life doth prove
The depth, the strength, the truth of woman's love!

IV.

When harvest days are passed, and autumn skies
The giant forests tinge with glorious hues,
How o'er the twilight of our thought sweet eyes
The fairy beauty of the soul diffuse!
The inspiring air like spirit voices sighs
Mid the close pines and solitary yews,
Though the broad leaves on forest boughs look sere,
And naked woodlands wail the dying year.

V.

Yet the late season brings no hours of gloom,
Though thoughtful sadness sighs her evening hymn,
For hearth-fires now light up the curtained room,
And Love's wings float amid the twilight dim:
Lost loved ones gather round us from the tomb,
And blest revealments o'er our spirits swim,
And Hopes, that drooped in trials, soar on high,
And linked affections bear into the sky.

VI.

Then, side by side, hearts, wedded in their youth,
In their meek blessedness expand and glow,
And, though the world be faithless, still their truth
No pause, no change, no soil of Time may know!
They hold communion with a world, in sooth,
Beyond the stain of sin, the waste of woe,
And the deep sanctities of well-spent hours
Crown their fair fame with Eden's deathless flowers.

VII.

Frail as the moth's fair wing is common fame,
Brief as the sunlight of an April morn;
But Love perpetuates the sacred name
Devoted to his shrine; in glory born,
The Boy-God gladly to the lone earth came
To vanquish victors and to smile at scorn,

And he will rise, when all is finished here,
The holiest seraph of the highest sphere.

VIII.

As fell the prophet's mantle, in old time,
On the meek heir of Israel's sainted sage,
Woman! so falls thy unseen power sublime
On the lone desert of man's pilgrimage;
Thy sweet thoughts breathe, from Love's delicious clime,
Beauty in youth, and Faith in fading age;
Through all Earth's years of travail, strife and toil,
His parched affections linger round thy smile.

IX.

In the young beauty of thy womanhood
Thou livest in the being yet to be,
Yearning for blessedness ill understood,
And known, young mother! only unto thee.
Love is her life; and to the wise and good
Her heart is heaven—'tis even unto me,
Though oft misguided and betrayed and grieved,
The only bliss of which I'm not bereaved.

X.

Draw near, ye whom my bosom hath enshrined!
O Thou! whose life breathes in my heart! and Thou
Whose gentle spirit dwelleth in my mind,
Whose love, like sunlight, rests upon my brow!
Draw near the hearth! the cold and moaning wind
Scatters the ruins of the forest now,
But blessings crown us in our own still home—
Hail, holy image of the Life to come!

XI.

Hail, ye fair charities! the mellow showers
Of the heart's springtime! from your rosy breath

The wayworn pilgrim, though the tempest lours,
Breathes a new being in the realm of Death,
And bears the burden of life's darker hours
With cheerlier aspect o'er the lonely heath,
That spreads between us and the unfading clime
Where true Love triumphs o'er the death of Time.

THE DREAM OF DEATH.

“THOU changest his COUNTENANCE and sendest him away.”

Scr.

I.

WORN down by suffering, humbled to the dust,
Draining the dregs of life's deep cup of woe,
Tried by his GOD to prove his deathless trust,
Counselled, like guilt, by faithless men below,
And left alone to brand the fiend unjust,
Yet Faith was still his last best friend—for lo!
With what a mournful beauty, pomp and power
His high pure mind illumines the darkened hour!

II.

In all the pride of power and wealth and fame
He once had stood in grandeur's halls, the lord
Of countless satellites, who round the flame
Of his great glory gathered, and adored
The circling shadow of a mighty name,
That o'er their darkness its refulgence poured.
Now through his gloom they groped their way afar
From the dimm'd glory of their morning star!

III.

Sackcloth was round him, ashes on his head,
And he was spotted with the plagues of hell;
His sons lay mingled with the mouldering dead—
His daughters slumbered in a darkened cell;
Mocked by his youth's first love, earth was his bed,
And his was hopelessness—he knew it well—
And helplessness and agony and scorn—
But his great spirit felt for what 't was born.

IV.

And, like a god, he cast away the dust
And ashes from his brow, and mid the pain
Of his dark trial rose and cried "Be just!
"Talk ye of judgment unto one whose brain
"Rolls in its agony like storm-clouds? must
"The tested heart in utter anguish feign
"The guilt it feels not that ye may exalt
"Your tongue faith over my repented fault?

V.

"Prince of the bann'd and branded fiends! away!
"I know, I feel the limit of thy power,
"And thou mayst tear and torture, but not slay,
"Nor tempt my spirit in its darkest hour!
"Oh! for the dawn of that redeeming day
"When the dark LEGION in their guilt shall cower,
"And ye shall feel, false counsellors! and long
"Remember in my woe ye did me wrong!

VI.

"Though the fierce arrows of the Almighty drink
"The blood of my pale heart, and every ill
"Assail me friendless, yet I will not shrink
"From the stern ordeal of my JUDGE, nor fill
"My mouth with penitence that ye may think
"Your haughty hearts the only righteous still;
"In all my agony my soul hath caught
"The smile of HIM for whom it ever sought.

VII.

"And in His faithfulness I will confide—
"The potter's hand disposeth of the clay;
"But retribution on the sinner's pride
"Is treasured up unto another day.
"Ye hold grief guilt and sorrow madness! hide
"Presumptuous judgment, mortals! while ye may,

“ For HE doth chasten that HE may refine
“ And say “ Behold, the broken-hearted Mine!”

VIII.

Then, in his agony, the Martyr cried
A wild lament o’er all his days on earth,
And, overwrought by anguish, reason died—
He madly cursed the dark hour of his birth!
But better thoughts came back: the godlike pride
Of a watched spirit, conscious of its worth,
The scorn of saws and sayings in distress,
And Faith in an Eternal Righteousness.

IX.

“ Man riseth in the morn and goeth forth,—
“ The sunset shadows come and where is he?
“ No more within his bosom hope has birth—
“ The clouded image of the Deity!
“ Chilled by the tempests of the icy North,
“ Stunn’d by the terrors of the days to be,
“ To faithless men no more a slave—no more
“ A naked wanderer on a desert shore!

X.

“ Where grandeur waits on guilt he dwelleth not,
“ Where secret sin holds triumph o’er its spoil,
“ Where kindred sympathies are all forgot,
“ The orphan’s heritage, the widow’s toil;
“ Where merit lingereth in a straw-thatch’d cot,
“ And Vice rolls by with folly’s scornful smile;
“ Where infant arms embrace the rock to save
“ Their famished bosoms from a yawning grave.

XI.

“ He sleepeth in the valley, with whose flowers
“ His solitary spirit often held

“ A silent fellowship in o’erpast hours,
“ When, like the summer sky, his free heart swelled,
“ And drank the music of seraphic bowers
“ In the green meadow and the wooded field:
“ And here he taketh now his last repose—
“ And dreameth not of all his buried woes.

XII.

“ There shall I slumber when my task is done,
“ And I have proved before all earth and hell
“ That Heaven hath yet an ever faithful son,
“ Who trembleth not beneath the Demon’s spell;
“ There shall I slumber with each lowly one
“ Who had a heart for praise, a voice to tell
“ That Mercy stands before the throne on high,
“ And Justice calls her sister in the sky.”

XIII.

Yes, ’tis a gladness in our grief and need,
The wrongs and obloquies that we must bear,
That home of peace where bosoms cease to bleed,
Whose portal shuts out suffering and despair;
Yet, e’en on earth, thou hadst thy crowning meed,
O deeply Tried and Faithful! let me wear
Thy heart through all the peril, sin and woe,
The troubled waters that around me flow!

XIV.

Like the red leaf in autumn on the wind,
The shadow on the dial of a cloud,
Fades the fresh beauty of the deathless mind
Beneath the unbreathing stillness of the shroud:
Thoughts vanish like dim ghosts, and leave behind
A name that lives a day among the crowd;
But darkness glooms along the waters wild
Where the barque waits for spirits undefiled.

XV.

And all must enter there when dust to dust
Hath been resigned by broken-hearted love,
And, though inscrutable, yet ever just,
The FATHER GOD awaits the soul above.
Be this unfaltering hope, abiding trust,
That with the cheerful meekness of the dove,
We may at last receive our great reward
Like him who dared the Fiend and bowed before the
LORD.

TO THE OWL.

I.

DARK Bird of the Night,
That shunneth the light,
Whither away on thy wandering flight?
“From the blood of the slain,
“And the gaze of the Dead,
“From the long lone plain
“Where the horseman bled,
“I hurry, I hurry and I come not again!”

II.

Lone lover of gloom
Whose lair is the tomb,
Why glarest thou o'er yon marsh of broom?
“The darkness is deep as death,
“But I see a dead man there,
“And I heard his throttled breath,
“And the gasp of his despair,
“When he perished alone on the dismal heath.”

III.

Bird of the Night! how did he die?
“With a cloven brow and a bloodshot eye,
“A clench of the hand and a gurgling cry;
“Then a form appeared and took
“The murdered in his embrace,
“And amid the forest brook
“I heard a plunge—I saw a face—
“Oh! never had living man such look!”

Miserere, Domine!

IV.

In his home of peace dear eyes
Yearned for their earthly paradise
While the shedder of guiltless blood had power;
But the bandit—where is he?
“The outcast wandereth on,
“And he skulks behind each tree,
“For the fear of the slaughter done—
“While the Gold—lo! it lies by the side of Thee!”
Miserere, Domine!

V.

Watcher of solemn woods,
That lov'st the roar of floods
When they plunge through the midnight solitudes,
Flap not thy wings, but stay!
“To snuff the warm blood of men?
“To gaze on the dead? away!
“In the depth of the hemlock glen
“Man cometh not, nor the sunlight of day.”
Miserere, Domine!

VI.

From the lightning scathed tree,
While his wings winnowed free,
The Bird hooted thrice and again at me;
Then through the rolling gloom
He took his darkened flight,
Untainted by the doom
Of that most fearful night,
When the horseman slept without bed or tomb!
Miserere, Domine!

RHIGAS.

This wise and patriotic son of Miltiades was the first to awaken his apathetic country to a sense of her wrongs and debasement. The best years of his short life were devoted to fallen Greece—the land of his birth; and the spirit, which he spread abroad, is awake, like that fair country's own Hyperion. He fell *by treachery* in May, 1798.

I.

FROM Thessaly's woods a voice goes forth
O'er the clouded skies and the desert earth,
And the Ancient Hills, as it sounds along,
Wail back the cry of a Nation's wrong,
And the Ægean Isles with a shout reply
To the alarum trump of victory.

Olympus bends to hear
The voice of ancient Power,
And the gods of Greece draw near
In this dark and fearful hour.

II.

Men stand erect in their pride once more
As their warriors stood in the days of yore,
When the mount and glen sent back the voice
Of weapons that bade the land rejoice,
And the song of the vintage in joy went up
As the Grecians gathered around the cup.

Then rose the poet's strain
From the sunny hillside's brow—
Words that may be heard again—
But shrined in the full heart now!

III.

The sons of old Greece start up again,
And grasp the sabre that long hath lain
In the drowsy sloth and cankering rust
Of the soul's despair—and they shake the dust
Of bondage from their banners high—
Their shield or shroud, for they do or die!

The wandering voice of Wrath wails on,
And Cæta bows as it hurries by,
And, as it sweeps o'er Marathon,
The Dead send up a battle-cry!

IV.

It thrills through the slumbering hearts of men
As they toil for the Turk in their native glen,
And Pallas springs up from her century's sleep,
And the god of the Trident is on the Deep,
And the Priestess lights her Delphic shrine,
And o'er it bends with a brow divine.

Helm and brand and shield and spear
In the altar's blazing glare,
And the sainted dead draw near
With the solemn brow of prayer.

V.

The beaconlights of the brave around
Blaze to the sky o'er the holy ground,
And warrior forms in their armour gleam
Like the giant shapes of a troubled dream;
With lances in rest and swords in hand,
As the Grecians stood, the Grecians stand!

The Turkman is slumbering by
In his tyrant garb of death,
While a Nation's victor cry
Hangs on a moment's breath.

VI.

THE VOICE, through the Pass of the Persian's shame,
Sounds over the blue and billowy seas,
Like the battle-song of a glorious name
Sung by the nine Castalides!
And the Helot leaps, at that magic word,
From the tyrant chains of his Titan lord.

The Moslem lelies fail
Amid the wild hurrah!
And the Othman pashas quail
Beneath the blast of war.

VII.

Through the ruined temple's hollow gloom,
Bursting in wrath from the sleepless tomb,
In his warmail each and his belted brand,
The Dead come forth in their stern command;
In the dark delirium of their trance
They hear the Voice and grasp the lance,

Like Philopoemen, last
Of all the Great of Old,
When on the hero passed
And sacked the foeman's hold.

VIII.

A glorious SHAPE is passing by
With a brow of gloom and a lowering eye,—
His casque is severed, his banner rent,
And his face like a shattered monument!
Like a warrior's ghost in the lightning's light,
He stands before the altar bright.

The cry of wrath is still,
And the beacon fires are dim,
And o'er each midnight hill
Is heard a funeral hymn.

IX.

“Dark the Danube, but darker far
“Are the death-stains on the scimitar!
“Deep rolls the Ister, but deeper he lies
“Whose eye was the light of your paradise!
“Weep vainly in bondage! the seal is set!
“Your freedom will be—but, oh, not yet!
 “Not Passwan Oglou’s power,
 “Nor the shield of might could save:
 “Death is the Patriot’s dower—
 “His freedom is—the grave!”

X.

Then thrice the warriors uttered “Woe!”
And thrice waved their sabres to and fro,
And vanished, like hope, with a hollow moan,
And the Priestess stood by her shrine alone.
The fire burned dim, but it burned on still,
When again there came, from Ida’s hill,
 The wild loud hymn of death—
 But in stormy wrath it came,
 And the Listener held his breath,
 And called on Jesu’s name.

XI.

“Slaves to the Othman! victory’s Lords!
“To the dust again bequeath your swords?
“No! they shall gleam in carnage yet
“Mid the deep death-thrust of the bayonet,
“And your souls shall bask in the battle’s bliss
“As on the proud day of Salamis!
 “I see the strife begun,
 “I hear the wail of woe!
 “On—on! ’tis Freedom’s sun
 “That lights the struggle!—Go!

XII.

“Go! with a brow where glories beam,
“To the burning wood and the gory stream!
“To Missolonghi’s waste of blood,
“Where the Grecians die in field and flood,
“Where they dare the deeds their fathers dared,
“And share the glory their fathers shared.
“Go to the warfare! Go!
“I see the banner wave!
“The brulottiers are skirring—lo!
“The Turk hath found his grave!”

XIII.

The beaconfires are lighted now
On the sea’s dark wave and the mountain’s brow,
The sabre gleams red on Marathon,
And a strong arm shakes the Moslem throne.
To the crown of your glory speed!
Blench not from battle! in victory bleed!
Till the poet’s dreams become
The creed of board and hearth,
And Greece is Freedom’s home,
The Holy Land of Earth!

THE SUMMER EVENING HYMN.

I.

WITH what a shadowing of her broad dim wings
Pale Twilight stealeth over vale and hill!
And what a floating crowd of faery things
Render mute homage to her voiceless will!
Blest Eventide! thy silent coming brings
Remorseless Quiet and Contentment still,
Gay Fancies and rejoicing Hopes, that roll
Like fair stars o'er the shut lids of the soul.

II.

Welcome! reliever of midsummer heat!
A blessing waits upon thy bounty now;
Breath, that is bliss, attends the heart's deep beat,
And fresh winds fan the dull and weary brow.
Lo! how the sunset, in a showery sheet
Of rich light, waves along the horizon low,
While o'er yon isle its parting glories rest
Like Memory's brightness in the good man's breast.

III.

The song-bird lifts its voice in vesper praise
And then mid dewy leaves seeks out its nest,
And flocks and herds, that sleep on burning days,
Graze on the clover now like creatures blest;
'Tis joy unto a heart that widely strays
O'er the dark sea of life and hath no rest,
To blend its sympathies with all that breathe,
And unto woods and streams its thoughts bequeath.

IV.

Along the gleaming brook, that purls and plays
Among the pebbles and o'erarching roots

Of this old elm—the haunt of careless days—
(Ah! little now their simple pleasure boots!)
Let me repose and with a heart of praise
Render meet thanks for every joy that shoots
Up from the hedge of thorns—the barren road—
Which year by year my faltering feet have trod.

V.

It is no season for repining care,
And my free spirit falters not, for yet
There is a magic in the rosy air
And dewy earth, when summer's sun hath set,
That lifteth up my thoughts, in silent prayer,
Where human weakness or demurring let
Taints not the springs of Thought, whose secret home
Is in the twilight bowers of time to come.

VI.

The changeful beauty of the sunset sky
Fades softly o'er the blue of Alna bay,
Like hallowed thoughts of saints who meekly die,
Whose faith was true, whose deeds were just alway;
White clouds, that o'er the azure ocean fly,
Retain awhile the holy light of day,
Then all is dimness, stillness, soft repose,
The hour of love for Nightingale and Rose.

VII.

Gush, ye blue waters from your fountain dell!
Soar, ye dim mountains to the fading heaven!
The upland woods of Edgecomb softly swell,
The Camden hills, amid the dusky even,
Throned o'er the hoary pilgrim's holy well,
Like prophets stand—to whom all worlds are given.
The pensive heart, with all the world at rest,
Sleeps mid the shades of its own peaceful breast.

VIII.

In the deep woods of Damariscotta's glen,
Though rude yet holy, stands the ruined fane,
Devoted, in this wild of warrior men,
Ages ago to God! the evening strain,
The morning prayer and psalm rose grandly then,
For lurking foes were near—a hideous train!
Few, feeble, faithful, there the pilgrims prayed,
And holy be THE TEMPLE OF THE GLADE!

IX.

The sacred places of the elder time
Retain no more their everlasting name,
But long their memory shall be held sublime
Who for their faith into the forest came,
Dared all the perils of a cruel clime,
And held their holy freedom ample fame:
More dread, a hut in ruins mid our woods
Than all Palmyra's marble solitudes.

X.

The valley brook hath now a mighty voice,
The larch and fir-trees sigh their vesper hymn,
The Thousand Stars upon their thrones rejoice,
And Nature slumbers on her mountains dim.
Far from the throng of men and city's noise,
While shadows beckon as they sink and swim,
My heart finds gladness in this tender gloom,
And deeply yearneth for the life to come.

THE DOOM OF THE DESERT.



TO

STACY G. POTTS, Esq.

MY DEAR POTTS,

ILLE VINCIT QUI PATITUR is a true maxim and a modest motto to an unambitious device. You well know that I have encountered the penalty; but time must prove whether the reward shall ensue. The path to the stars is long and thorny, says the sage; but flowers sometimes gladden the weary way, and such friendships as yours are a sufficient recompense for years of toil. I have had more than my share of trial and suffering, but, if afflictions have pierced my heart, they have lodged the image of my friend in its profoundest depths. The sacrifices of the Muse should not be offered on a golden altar, but laid upon a pile of opening buds and leafy boughs, amidst the solitude of a quiet vale. With the refreshed feeling of old love, I dedicate this Poem to You; and may many years still leave your heart its youth!

S. L. FAIRFIELD.

THE DOOM OF THE DESERT.

The argument of this Poem, in which the author has studiously abstained from the perversion of any given event, and even from the legitimate privilege of the poet, is familiar to all biblical readers in the Exodus of the Hebrews.

The only poet, I believe, who has heretofore adopted this subject for the exercise of his descriptive powers, is the late learned and eloquent Bishop Reginald Heber; but it has never been my fortune to meet with his production, nor has a diligent search been rewarded with even a single extract. Whatever merit, therefore, this Poem may enjoy, will be at least original.

THE DOOM OF THE DESERT.

WHEN with a mighty hand and glorious arm
And many wonders in the shuddering land,
The Lord led forth his people, by the sea,
From cruel bondage 'neath a ruthless king,
Terror was on the Nations and deep fear
And quaking apprehension; and stern hearts
Trembled, and fearless spirits quailed in awe,
And wild eyes quivered in supremest dread
Of yet another judgment; and cold dews
Hung on pale brows and breathless lips, and men—
Proud, bold, strong-hearted men, in huddled crowds,
Stole by with hurried steps, as every leaf
Were a cold scorpion, every sunny brook
A stream of blood, and every floating cloud
The fearful tempest's herald! Death did seem
To clutch their hearts and wring their spirits out;
While multitudes, like shadows, glided through
The fair green land of Goshen, and besought
The Hebrews' blessing ere they left the realm
Of plague and famine and unnumbered woes.

The Year of Terrors! while they hurried forth
Their goaded slaves, remembrance was alive,
And burning Thought bent o'er the blackened page
Of Egypt's awful story; Land of Nile!
How was thy glory dimmed when Vengeance, seen
But in the ruin, o'er the kingdom passed—
And woe for great Busiris! Fire and hail,
That burned and darkened the dissolving skies;
The rending thunder and the blinding storm;
The sea-like Nile and every lesser stream,

And woodland fountain and sequestered rill
Purpled by unshed blood and filled with death.
The famished locusts, that, from desert sands,
Darkening the brazen heavens, in armies came
Over the beautiful land, and, ere a day,
Chattered in triumph on each leafless tree;
The noisome, deadly plagues of loathsome things
Unnameable; the darkness to be felt,
When tender ties were sundered and dear friends
And lovers met unconscious in the gloom,
And battled, famished wretches! for their food;
Last and most dreadful, the Death-Angel's wrath,
And viewless sword that slew unstained with blood,
The desolation of the unseen Power,
The rushing wings that turned the air to flame
At dead midnight when every eye was shut;—
—These awful judgments were not dealt in vain.
And frantically they drave the Hebrews forth.

Then rose the wail of widowhood—the voice
Of desolation and despairing woe
Through the proud Kingdom of the Pyramids;
And stern eyes wept like maidens' and high hearts
Sunk with the crush of iron in mailed breasts,
And scoffing Infidels fell down in prayer
To Ibis and the unnumbered reptile gods,
Who once dwelt in their strength and knew no Power
Save the false deities of Earth and Hell;
And Egypt's purple heir awoke from dreams
Of proud dominion while his chamber rung
With shrieks of death and howlings of despair;
For in the palace, at the midnight hour,
And in the cottage and the dewy tent,
And in the dungeon and the banquet-hall,
The firstborn shrieked and died! The haughty Prince
Fell from his golden grandeur while his lips
Were uttering ribald scorn of that high Power

Whose one breath blasted all his flower of pride:
The Warrior, eloquent in battle schemes,
Or dreaming of proud victories to come,
Blenched from the unseen foe—his dauntless heart
Gasping its last thick breathings and his brain
Rolling in dizzy horror; and his mail
Clanked as he fell in the still house of Peace,
Far from the field of glory, unbeheld,
His power unproved, his towering fame eclipsed!
With a low sullen moan, his trumpet voice
Sank as he challenged Death and gurgled forth
The Chamian warcry hoarse;—then all was still.
The Statesman's wisdom, that o'ermastered men,
And shadowed out the fate of countless climes,
Availed not the great counsellor of kings.
The man, whose spirit soared beyond the age,
Whose voice was as an oracle—whose eye
Caught the revealments of the midnight stars—
Whose footprint was held holy—he fell down
Without disciple near to lift his head,
Or close his eyes or catch his latest breath,
Or balm his cold corse for the burial.
The poet's burning heart grew cold, his eye
Dim mid the elysian glories of his dreams,
And gloom came o'er the spirit that had been
The godlike sun of many worlds to him.
The hoar Magician perished mid his charms
And spells and incantations, while he watched
The stars and muttered oracles of doom,
By astrologic power imparting life,
The demon life of cloister'd sorcery,
Or sought by strange enchantments, like the king
Of Elis, Salmoneus, to deride
The Majesty that laid the wizard low.
His hoarded treasures vanished from the eye
Of the pale merchant, and his well-skill'd hand
Forgot its cunning when the film of death,

Its faintness and dim horror o'er him came
Like an unthought-of hell; but still he grasped
His gold and pressed it to his dying heart,
And triumph'd while he muttered its amount.
The Shepherd waked not with his bleating flock,
And on the morn his wandering herd drew near
In wedg'd array and snuffed his body o'er,
And bounded off; then came again and gazed
And vainly mourned. In the deep dungeon slept
The sleepless captive, now in chains no more.
'The bridegroom and the bride ne'er met again.
'The priest fell down beside his lighted shrine;
'The holy fire went out and Egypt's god
Osiris cried unto his father Jove
In vain amid the temple's hollow gloom.
'The babe sighed on its mother's breast and died.
Death's icy touch awoke the widowed wife.
'The aged father was left desolate.
And Egypt mourned, through all her crowded coasts,
Her pride, her beauty and her glory gone!

Like armies vanquished by their victories,
In high deliverance the Hebrews passed,
And hurrying multitudes of men bowed down
By toil and travail and the bondman's stripes,
And women pale with sickness, woe and want,
And youth whose brows revealed not life's fresh morn—
Bright thoughts and sunny smiles and lightsome hearts,
And babes that drank in sadness from the breast
Which gave them being—mingled with their flocks
And herds—went through the wasted land and heard
The sound of sorrow and the mournful cry
Of misery, blended with unearthly prayers
And maledictions, that fell on the heart
Like the red flames upon the SAINTED THREE;
While, as they hasted o'er the blackened fields,
The giant skeletons of ancient kings

Did rise in their cold sepulchres, (the pride,
The vanity of ancient fame,) and stand
Upright, and lift their fleshless hands to heaven,
And clench their rattling fingers as the spear
And shield and sword and sceptre were their own
To battle with the strong Death Angel stretched
On tempest wings amid the skies to slay!
Then mid the Memphian pyramids they fell,
And a deep groan, long, loud and terrible,
Went up from base to battlement:—and on
The Hebrews held their unacquainted way.

With bread unleavened—food snatched up in haste—
Loins girded as they ate the Paschal Lamb—
And hearts all quivering in their liberty—
The outcast People of the Lord passed on;
The Pillar of The Highest was their guide,
His angels their defence, His word their faith,
And o'er the desert sands, where the hot sun
Burned like a sevenfold furnace, and the wind
Poured through the stifled heavens in purple streams
Of heat that drank the very heart's blood up,
Where not the shadow of a living thing,
Nor shrub, nor blade of grass, nor ruin's weed,
The ivy or the thistle ever grew,—
One vast dead Waste, where man alone is free,
Beyond all tyrant usages, beyond
The demon passions of society,
A law unto himself—the Child of Earth!
They kept upon their heaven appointed way,
Without a tree or rock or tent to shield
Their weary slumbers from the blast of Death.
And in the midst of their vast multitude
They bore the bones of their great Governour,
The Prophet Prince of Memphis, to whose eye,
While yet amid the bowers of On he dwelt,
Famine appeared and ruin ere they came,

And whose high wisdom still preserved alive
The hearts of many nations. So they went
To the possession of their heritage
Far in their own bright, pleasant Palestine.
And 'twas a solemn scene, that vast array
Of a peculiar People o'er the wild
Wandering—a caravan whose guide and guard
Was the unceasing presence of their God.
—Day on the Desert! o'er the rolling sands
The red sun poured his burning glories down,
And weary trod the Pilgrims, fearfully
The wilderness did lengthen, and each heart
Grew faint and sick and desolate; the herds
Panted and at every pause sunk down,
And many a lamb from the unnumbered flock
Was left a white spot on the lonely Waste.
But, oh, how fearlessly the unbridled child
Of Ishmael hurried, on his Yemen barb,
Like a dark shadow in the sunbeam's track,
Away—away on predatory quest!
His tiar'd turban and his girdle, gemm'd
With pearls of Orient, shot back the rays
Of the wild sun, and his dark eagle eye
Glanced o'er the Desert—his perpetual home,
With nameless ecstasy—for he was free—
Free as the Samiel—and as fearful too!
Men shrink and shudder at the Arab's name,
Yet godlike is his nature, far beyond
The reach of common asps, that through the mire
Of social life skulk to their dark attack,
And reverence laws in speech they break in deed;
For what he doth is done unshrinkingly
And open as the sunbeam, and he dares
To vindicate the act he dares achieve.
Far from the path of Hagar's son, alone,
The ostrich, proud and ruthless Bird! appeared
And threw aloft her crested head and raised

Her stoic eye at the unwonted sound
Of human steps; and then along the sands,
Not as in fear but scorn, she stalked away.
The spotted leopard started from his lair,
As the vast caravan drew near, and glared
Upon the foremost pilgrims ere he sprung
And vanished on the horizon; but the snake,
That basked in volumed folds upon the waste,
Scarce lifted his huge head while thousands passed.

Gifted with gems and jewels and fine gold
And purple robes and priceless ornaments,
For from the satrap to the serf—from king
To humblest vassal—the whole land had poured
Its treasures at their feet, rejoicing thus
To buy redemption from the fire and flood—
The mighty multitude encamped between
The desert and the sea when sunk the sun
In oriental glory; and amid
The solemn dimness of the fading eve
Ten thousand shadows glimmered o'er the beach
Of the loud sea, and countless voices rose,
Amid the awful music of the waves,
In humble trust and fervent thankfulness,
And mothers kissed their babes and blessed their lot,
Safe from the ruthless spoiler; and old men
Rehearsed their trials past and all the hopes
That long had cheered their toils and sufferings,
And o'er the deep gloom of their bondage cast
The blessings of the glorious covenant sealed
With their forefathers by the God of Truth.
And plighted lovers held communion now
Far from the cruel tasker and the sound
Of a loved brother's torture, and their hearts
Gushed forth, like forest fountains when the showers
Of Spring come down upon the tender herb,
And mingled in their gladsome melodies,

Like the vast music of the mocking bird.
They stood where none would ever stand again,
And marked the lonely Desert's glorious eve,
The solitary majesty of Earth,
The craggy rocks of Horeb and the towers
Of Migdol veiled in the last hues of day,
The dark-blue heaven, where gleaming stars appeared
Like spirits watching o'er the sons of men,
The unbounded wilderness and rolling sea,
And the great army of the Worshippers,
That 'mid this shorelessness of grandeur seemed
Like martyrs waiting for the sacrifice.
Far, where the straining eye waxed dim and strange,
The lonely Emir glimmered o'er the waste,
And his wild fearlessness lent wizard charms
To the o'erwhelming glory of the scene.

But Night came down upon the Desert—fires
Threw their red light o'er the mysterious wave,
And for the glorious angel of the Lord
The host stood trembling—while uplifted eyes
Watched the Fire-Pillar, and ten thousand prayers,
Without a voice, ascended from the heart!
Silence lay listening round the MAN OF GOD,
As far apart, with awe he stood and held
Counsel with ministers that were not seen.

“Dost thou remember?” said an ancient man,
Communing with the tried friend of his youth,
(The sea-wind waved his hoary hair—his voice
Was low and solemn as night converse held
Among the tombs—and awe dwelt on his brow,)
“On that dread Night when the Death-Angel passed,
“How the heart hung in quivering breathlessness,
“And fearful women cowered and brave men shrunk
“Together in thick crowds, and cold hands grasped
“In speechless terror, and quick glancing eyes

“ Gleamed in the beacon-light from every tower
“ That threw its bright flame o’er the midnight skies?
“ The agony of fear, the o’erpowering sense
“ Of boundless power accomplishing its will,
“ The awful light--dost thou remember well?
“ That flashed around us when the seraph turned
“ His eye and on our lintels saw the blood
“ Of the unspotted paschal lamb--the sign
“ Of our redemption! while with pilgrim staves,
“ Girded and sandall’d, on our hearths we stood,
“ Till from the city the loud cry went up!
“ The night--’t was very terrible! through all
“ Our holy habitations not a voice
“ Of life was heard, while, like the desert blast,
“ The bright Destroyer flew, his mighty wings,
“ Like many waters when the storm prevails,
“ Or autumn winds amid the creaking wood,
“ On to the final judgment, the last plague
“ Of Egypt, rushing!--Every living thing
“ Blenched into covert--all was still--the air
“ Stirred not the gossamer--the breath of men
“ Came not, save when the heart’s protracted pulse
“ Sobbed deeply once as if to certify
“ That life was there!--so awfully the hours
“ Linger’d, while all the silent air did seem
“ To whirr, and the bleared eye failed in the scope
“ Of its true vision--all the atmosphere
“ Rolling before it like a shrivelled scroll,--
“ Till rose o’er Memphis the deep wail of death,
“ The shriek of desolation and despair!
“ Then a deep breath--a quick convulsive start--
“ The doom was dealt--the chains dropped from our
limbs--
“ And the slave heard--‘ Go, thou art Free! away!
“ ‘ Forth from the land! and bless us ere ye go!’ ”
The words yet hung upon the pallid lips
Of the gray father, patriarch of his race,

When on the midnight air, o'er the dim waste,
Came the deep chariot roll, the tramp of steeds,
'The clang of armour and loud clarion's bray,
And the still heavens reechoed back the cry
Of Pharaoh's herald, as in pomp and power,
'The Monarch of the Pyramids, mid shouts
Of exultation, on the feeble crowd
Rushed in the van-guard of his steel-clad host.
Before the Hebrews the deep waters rolled
In their dominion, and behind, the foe
In ruthlessness of purpose stood secure,
Waiting to-morrow's sacrifice;—around
'The Desert slept in burning solitude.
“Now who can save the slaves?” cried the proud King.
“Off with my armour! it ill suits a prince—
“To-morrow!”—Mid the luxury of his tent
'The son of Ham drowned every thought of care.
“Who—who shall save us?” loud the Hebrews wailed.
“Oh! for the land of Egypt—the rich land
“Of joy and plenty! bred in Pharaoh's court,
“The Traitor Moses hath but led us forth
“To perish in the wilderness!” Deep fear
Thrilled every bosom;—mothers laid their babes
On the bare earth and o'er them knelt and bowed;
The father bade his well-loved children die,
As they had lived, in plenitude of faith;
'The chary maiden threw her arms around
Her trembling lover; and old men prepared
To lay their hoar heads in the wilderness.
Who could deliver? where the mighty arm
To make a pathway through the unfathomed sea?
Or overthrow the Egyptian in his strength?

“The Cloud! the Pillar! lo, it moves!” each tongue
Ceased its deep murmurs—every eye did watch
The prodigy. “How thick the darkness hangs
“O'er the Egyptians! here the fair light falls

“Brighter than sunbeams!” Calmly Moses speaks;
“Watch ye and pray, it is the LORD;” and all,
From the fair child to wrinkled eld, fell down
And one great Voice of Prayer was heard in heaven.
Armies of clouds now rose through all the depths
Of the vast sky, in dark sublimity,
And many thunders, heralds of THE GOD,
Whose majesty o’erpasses human thought,
Uttered their voices; and a glorious star
Gleamed mid the darkened air, and, throned
Thereon, THE APPEARANCE of a dreadful form,
Whose awful eye shone inconceivable
Grew visible unto the astonished host.
The Leader of the Chosen People heard
A voice unheard by every other ear,
Bowed to the dust his pallid brow, and thrice
O’er the deep waters waved his shepherd rod.
Mid the unbroken silence of the host,
With hollow voices the mysterious depths
Replied and parted, rising ridge on ridge,
High as the tower of Belus, anarch fane,
Or pillar’d Parthenon of later days,
Submissive to the Power all worlds obey.
Thrown from the purple Pillar, quenchless fire,
Like lightnings mid a rain-storm, leapt along
The crystal battlements and downward gleamed
A wondrous glory; through the radiant waves
The monarchs of the sea, leviathan,
Waltron and every uncouth monster gazed
In terror; and the dolphin, richly clothed
With beauty, darted o’er the waters blue;
Like a dim apparition, the fierce shark
Appeared and vanished; and all creatures seemed
Affrighted that their secret lair should be
The pathway of unnatural beings, wrought
In other mould, and their blue shadowy cells
Blaze with mysterious light unknown before.

There was a revel in the Egyptian camp.
Pages in purple robes and maidens fair
From fairest lands stood round the king, who lay,
Like a divinity, on cushions wrought
From Tyrian tissue, and around him spread
The golden cups and ewers of the feast,
Whose luxuries had never left his board,
Howe'er his people hunger'd; and above,
The crimson curtains of his gorgeous tent
Floated in massy folds. Gay voices rose
Amid the silent sand-hills, and the wine
Went round, and maddened merriment prevailed
Through all the camp; among his prostrate slaves
Proud Pharaoh rejoiced in victory's pride:
"Lift up the music of the cymbal! let
"The trumpet wail the battle-dirge—and now
"The song of onset!—so, it soundeth well!
"Come hither, slave! give me that golden bowl—
"Now take it—there 's enough of precious spoil
"Left for—to-morrow! every man that bears
"The banner of the Pyramids henceforth
"Shall be the lord of two score Hebrew slaves.
"I am a king again! these miracles,
"These dark accursed plagues and slaughterings
"Of that old tawny Traitor o'er my heart
"Have tyrannized too long and fatally.
"Why, Fool! the magi wrought the self-same deeds
"And every novice in the demon art.
"No more of it! to-morrow is their doom!"
The clarions sounded and the cymbals brayed
And thousands cried—"Forever live, O King!"
"Trust not in armour! put thy harness off
"As thou didst gird it on!" A Voice replied.
"Who spake? whence came it?" every lip was mute
And Pharaoh's brow grew cold and pale as Death's,
And silence slumbered in the banquet tent.

With hurried steps and many a fearful glance,
The Chosen Nation enter on their path
Through the deep gulf; the Man of God before
And the bright guiding Cloud behind the host.
In voiceless awe they pass o'er the deep bed
Of the uplifted sea, and flocks and herds
Shrink from the unquiet waters and move on
Like things in terror—but they make no sound.
Majestic Miriam—song-gifted maid!
Inspiring all by her triumphant eye
And brow of holy beauty, mid the crowd
Of trembling women, with unfaltering step,
Moved in the faith of an avenging Power;
O'er her pale forehead, like a solemn veil,
Her hair in dark luxuriance fell—her lips
Parted as if her heart would soar to heaven,
And her cheek glowed with such a glorious smile
As mission'd prophets wear in days of doom.
Clinging unto her skirt, a fair-haired girl,
Whose mother died in bondage and whose sire
Fell from the towers of Pithom while he built
The treasure-city, like a timid fawn,
Kept on beside the Prophetess, full oft
Whispering—"Dear Miriam! yonder is the shore!"

"Hark! 't is a trumpet wails along the surge!
"The chariot-wheels! the dreadful clash of spears!
"'T is Pharaoh—'t is the accursed king! he comes!"
The horseman crieth and the war-horse neighs,
For his broad nostrils snuff the battle's blood,
And Egypt's tyrant, ravining for his prey,
Rusheth with all his powers amid the sea,
Shouting—"Pursue! Pursue! Spare not!" and all
Echo their dreadful monarch's voice of war.
Yet the man Moses turned not—seemed not now
To hear the clash of weapons nor the shrieks
That rent the shuddering air—but on he kept

With an unaltered step, an unchanged brow,
An eye of prophecy upraised to heaven,
A bosom calm, a spirit unappalled.
“Crowd not around me, brethren! I am dust,
“But He that led you forth will save you still;
“Is His arm shortened that it cannot save?
“Be still, and wait what He appointeth us!”
On came the armed foe with battle cries
And noise of many trumpets; through the gloom
The eloquent son of Amram heard the voice
Of proud Busiris to his chivalry
Shouting—“Slay not, but seize and take alive,
“—Your head upon the forfeit—him who leads
“The Rebels forth!”—O what an awful smile
Passed o’er the face of Miriam, while she raised
Her large dark eye to heaven—“**THY WILL BE DONE!**”
’T was all she answered to the monarch’s charge,
Yet those high words came like an oracle.

The daylight gushes and the foe draws near,
The Idumean shore in the pale light appears.
And Moses treads its sands, and every soul
Of all the hurrying host dwells on his brow.
It blanches not, but his lips move in prayer,
As throng on throng rush from the sea and fall
Like victims on the shore. Why pause they now?
The fierce pursuers? Lo! their gallant steeds
Drop dead, the wheels of their proud chariots
Move not—the Egyptians stand in that deep gulf
Like marble images of wrought despair!
The waning Fire-Cloud rose and passed before
The Hebrews and the Rod of Moses waved!
“By Apis! ’t is a race accursed! Return!”
Cried the proud Son of Ham. He spake too late.
The eternal waters, with an awful rush,
As of a million blended thunders, fell,
And, through the broken billows, Israel saw

The mail-clad warriors in the agony
Of their last hour, when from the iron cars
Of war they leapt, and threw away their spears,
And tore their armour off, and hurried through
The waters merciless as they had been.
The Red Sea rolled above their buried pride!
The roar, the foam awhile prevailed, and then
Upon the hissing surge great Pharaoh rose
And spread abroad his princely hands for aid,
And grasped the waters in his dying strength,
And gasped and howled his curse and sank and died!
Vain all the mighty agony; the flood
Fell in unnumbered fathoms o'er the flower
Of orient war; and to the morning skies
Israel's triumphant hymn and song of praise
In one vast melody of voice went up.

THE IDEALIST.

I.

WHEN the last hues of sunset fade away,
And blend in magic wreaths of light and shade,
And stillness sleeps beside the closing day,
Drinking the music of the breezy glade,
 'Tis joy to wander forth alone
 Through shadowy groves and solemn woods,
 And muse of pleasures past and gone,
 'Mid nature's holy solitudes;
For then my spirit to its God aspires,
And worships in the light of Love's ascending fires.

II.

Where rocks hang tottering from the mountain's side,
And ancient trees in hoary grandeur wave,
I love to sit—forgetting pomp and pride,
And all the passions that the soul enslave,—
 And yield my heart to the sweet charm
 Of nature in her loneliness,
 While soft voiced zephyrs, breathing balm,
 The perfumed shrubs and flowers caress,
And the last song-bird pours her parting lay
Of love and praise to bless the brightly closing day.

III.

There is a loveliness in nature's smile,
Which fills the heart with heaven's own holy gladness,
Though he, who banquets on her charms, the while
Feels thoughts steal o'er him near allied to sadness;
 When 'mid the perfect works of God,
 He muses on the sin and folly
 That make man's heart their dark abode—
 Oh, who would not be melancholy?

How sad the thought that this fair world should be
The dwelling-place of guilt and helpless misery!

IV.

Yet if his woe be unallied to crime,
And suffering not from evil conscience spring,
To nature's bosom let him come, what time
Flowers ope the bud and birds are on the wing,
And there the fretful world forget
And search the world of his own breast;
Where thoughts like suns arise and set,
And whirlwind passions rage unblest;
There let the son of song and sorrow lie
And inspiration catch from nature's speaking eye!

V.

From earliest youth I loved alone to climb
The moss-wreathed rock, and from the mountain's brow,
O'er sea and land, an amplitude sublime,
To gaze when sunk the sun in radiant glow,
And poured o'er quiet vales and hills,
And groves and meads and gushing streams,
Such glory as creation fills,
His last full swell of golden beams.
O ye, who would adore the Eternal Power,
Go forth alone and pray at evening's hallowed hour!

VI.

The spirit then throws off the garb of clay,
Which in the warring world 'tis doomed to wear,
And robes itself in beautiful array,
And soars and sings amid the blooming air,
Where in aerial halls of light
Meet kindred spirits pure and good,
And parted souls again unite
Where grief and pain cannot intrude,
And in the radiance of soul-mingling eyes,
Reveal the mystic power of heaven's high harmonies.

VII.

I ever was a melancholy child,
Unmirthful and unmingling with the crowd;
The loneliest solitude on me hath smiled
When lightning darted from the rifted cloud;
 And I have felt a strange delight
 'Mid forests and the cavern's gloom,
 And wandered forth at dead midnight
 To muse beside the lonely tomb;—
I always loved the light of that dread eye,
Which flashed upon me from eternity!

VIII.

I knew not whence such unshared feelings came—
I only knew my heart was full of deep
Emotions vivid—but without a name;
Within my breast they would not—could not sleep,
 But swayed me in their giant power
 To passion's uncommuning mood,
 And drave me from the festive bower
 To ruined tower and lonely wood,
Where on my soul ideal glories came,
Fairies and oreads bright and coursers wrapt in flame.

IX.

Oh how I loved that solitary trance—
That deep upheaving of the bosom's sea,
O'erstrewn with gems that dazzled on my glance,
Like eyes that gleam from out eternity!
 Creatures of every form and hue,
 Lords of the earth and angels past
 In garb of gold before my view,
 Like lightnings on the hurrying blast,
And voices on my inward spirit broke,
And mysteries breathed, and words prophetic spoke.

X.

The child of reverie and the son of song,
A word could wound me or a look depress;
I saw the world was full of ill and wrong
And sin and treachery and sad distress;
And so e'en in my youth's bright morn,
I fled the haunts that others love,
That I might think why I was born,
And what below and what above
Was due from one thus sent upon the earth
To sow and reap in tears and mourn his painful birth.

XI.

My birth-place was the airy mountain height,
And childhood passed 'mid nature's grandeur wild,
And still I see by memory's magic light,
How on my soul each Alpine mountain smiled!
Though years have passed since I was there,
And many a change hath o'er me come,
There 's not a scene, or wild or fair,
Around my long forsaken home,
But I could point in darkness out, and tell
The shape and form of things I loved so well.

XII.

Trees, birds and flowers were my familiar friends
In boyhood's days—and every leaf that grew
Whispered soft oracles of love;—there blends
With budding thought a spirit from the dew,
That gems each quivering leaf and flower;
And precious to the mind mature
Are memories of that guiltless hour,
When with a worship fond and pure
The soul beheld in every thing below
A God sublime, whom we in works alone can know.

XIII.

Deep in the soul rest early thoughts, and now
My spirits roam 'mid lonely hills, when night
Her starry veil throws o'er her spotless brow,
And wraps her elfin form in fair moonlight;
Then o'er me come those thoughts again,
Which were my heaven in other years,
And I forget my bosom's pain,
And cease to feel my trickling tears.
Wierd sybils! cease of destiny to prate!
The boy creates for life and ratifies his fate.

XIV.

Here let me rest—a wanderer tired and faint,
Dear Nature! on thy soft maternal breast,
And learn for others those fair scenes to paint,
Which taught me wisdom and which made me blest!
Fashion and folly still may rove
And seek for pleasure in the throng,
But I will live in thy sweet love,
And blend thy praises with my song,
O lovely daughter of the holy One,
Whose smile wafts spirits to the heavenly throne!

THE TRIAL OF THE TROTH.

I.

YE high Divinities! who erst abode
Amidst the piny woods of Ida's mount
Or 'neath Leucadia's brow, when Paris gave
The golden fruit to Venus, and the Maid
Sappho, for love of faithless Phaon, sought
The still companionship of sea-nymphs crowned
With wreaths of pearl and coral! sad as words
Of comfort to a sick and wasted heart
Have ever been your oracles; the voice
Of shrined Apollo ever cometh forth
Like winds from the wild heavens when surging seas
Burst o'er the shattered barque. Alas for Love
And Beauty! their torn blossoms strew the waste
Of human life—and Genius is but woe.
Another song of sorrow! happiness
Is voiceless, echoless and Love once crown'd,
No more is left—but grief is eloquent.

II.

Far in that northern land and mid those hills
Where wandering Vasa, among faithful hearts,
Found welcome refuge in his trying hour,
Two Lovers dwelt of low degree with men,
Of hard conditions and restricted powers,
But gentle hearts and unsoiled consciences.
The waxing and the waning moon on them
Shed her pure pearly light and every star
Listened upon its throne to their discourse

Nightly, with smiles that came like music down.
By day Leoni toiled in darksome mines
With the cheered spirit of prophetic hope,
And as he gazed upon the precious ore
Delved from the depth, he felt how void and vain
Were affluence without the riches of the heart—
How welcome, with Luzelia, a few coins,
How false, without her, famed Golconda's wealth.
Thus Love transfuses its own light o'er all
The trials and privations of our lot,
From evil winneth good, from poverty
Wealth unimagined, and from toil repose
Through starry hours beneath green canopies.
Thus Love becomes unto itself a power
Supreme o'er great obstructions, and all things
Of beauty are its household-teraphim,—
Sweet images of hopes that rest upon
The days of sunny loveliness to come.

III.

So they lived on in unremitted toil
Each for the other, and the lights and shades
Of thought sequestered to one little spot
Passed o'er them like the shadows of white clouds,
Breeze wafted, o'er the mirror'd summer stream.
Passion, with all its fears and jealousies,
And fevered aspirations and regrets,
And dark repinings and intense desires,
They knew not, felt not, feared not in its power;
Amid the solitude of simple life
Love is a deep conviction of the heart,
A dewy flower, that, circled by green leaves,
Breathes the blest air of heaven, itself as blest;
A still and hidden brook, that glides along,
Known only by the greenness of its banks;
A spirit, like its mountain home of birth,
Mighty though meek, pavilioned in the skies,

Yet all-benignant to the smiling earth;
 A quiet thought that dwells and works unseen
 But in the charm of its accomplishment,
 Ever attendant, watchful, true in faith,
 A guide and guard through peril, and in want
 A tender solace as in joy a crown.
 The Lovers talked and counselled and communed
 Confidingly as wedded hearts should do,
 And both together coffer'd up a hoard,
 Scant means are ample where the wants are few,
 To signalize to-morrow's bridal feast.

IV.

To-morrow! 'tis the changing dream of hope,
 The vision of the weary hearted in the depth
 Of solitary suffering, and the crown
 Of many a proudly imaged enterprise
 That never was accomplished. O To-morrow!
 Crowds of strange deeds and unfulfilled events
 Lie unrevealed in thy dark mysteries,
 And many an eye desireth to behold
 The book of knowledge though 'tis written there,
 (And prayers the dread decree cannot reverse,)
 That death or dread disaster hasteneth on!
 —The bridal-banquet waits—hath waited long—
 Why cometh not the bridegroom? Up and down
 Luzelia wanders, from the window place
 Looks forth with restless eyes, and doubtfully
 Questions his absence—but none give reply.
 Night wears away—the bidden guests depart,
 Eloquent in dim surmises and vague fears,
 Some scoffing at the Lover's faithlessness,
 And some repining o'er their lack of cheer,
 And some, more thoughtful, (age and trial give
 A tone of prophecy to many a mind)
 Suggesting sudden danger, lone mishap,
 And suffering unadministered—and death.

Discoursing hurriedly, o'er moonlight hills
The bridal guests have passed—and every glen
Echoes with wonderment that one so true
Should taint his troth and fail the festival
Of plighted Love so hardly earned by toil
And cheered by hopes that sanctify the heart.
“To-morrow will reveal!”—To-morrow comes!

V.

It comes in summer glory, like a bride
In the rich bloom of beauty and of hope,
Or a high-hearted king of orient Inde,
O'er the blue swelling seas, for few brief days
Sunny and tranquil like the human heart,
And o'er the cedar forests and oak woods
Of the proud mountains of Dalecarlia, veiled
In floating mist or glistening with young dew.
From the harmonious waters of all streams
The morning vapour curls and seems to rise
In forms of fair-hair'd dryads, as of old
Along Permessus' banks the daughters nine
Of wise Mnemosyne, when they had drank
The holy dew amidst the fountain vale,
Together climbed the hill of Helicon.
The song-birds lift their voices all around,
The violets and hyacinths unveil
The pictured bosoms of their virgin buds,
The fine and racy air becomes a bliss
To the free organs of the heart, and heaven
Bends in more beautiful arcades and seems
Swelling far up, beyond all taint of earth,
In azure vastness, on whose shadowy edge
Hyperion pours the glories of his brow.

VI.

How felt Luzelia? Moonlight unto her,
Through the void watches of the night, had been

A sole companion, and her tossing thoughts,
Like stormy waters nameless leagues from land,
Rolled through the darkened boundlessness of mind,
Sounding a terrible music to her heart.
Like one lone palm amid a sea of sands,
She stood in the pale beauty of the moon,
Whose mellow light around her softly stole
With a pervading blessedness, that fell
Upon her fainting spirit with a sense
Of still and solemn faith. Thou blessed Light!
Held holy in all times—in every clime—
Among all people; on the mourner's brow
Thou pourest consolation and dost woo
Grief from its darkened citadel and turn
The wormwood of the heart to soothing balm.
And, all unconsciously, Luzelia blessed
Thy ministrations, Dian! while she gazed
On the deep shadows of the woods, the glow
And gloom of changing forest streams, and rocks
Abrupt and massy, on whose jutting crags
The transitory beams streamed like a shower
Of molten pearls; though all the lingering night
The image of no human form appeared
To gladden the fixed eye or charm away
Perilous thoughts inurned; but there she stood,
Poor girl! stunned, dumb, and breathless, like the work
Of some most perfect sculptor, Phidias old
Or Praxiteles; yet her ear was wrought
To agony's intensity of sound,
And oft her own deep pulses or the stir
Of leaves came o'er her like the echo faint
Of far-off footsteps hurrying o'er the dale.
Leoni came not—but yet she could not doubt
The faith well known for years and deeply tried,
And thus she shunn'd the strongest agony

That Love can feel—the faithlessness of one
Deeply beloved, who robs the heart and smiles.

VII.

Her mother—wasted, palsy-stricken, old,
A leafless tree that moaned in every wind,
Missed not Luzelia's well-accustomed voice
Upon the morn, nor lacked her common aid,
Nor marked she, in the oblivion of her age,
The pale brow and unrested eye and tones
Faltering and low, of her most priceless child,
Who shrined her unimagined fearfulness
And desolation in her fondest heart,
And held alike her constancy of love
And duty to the helpless. Crowds went forth
O'er vale and hill and mountain echoes bore
Leoni's name through every darkened wood!
No answer came. They questioned man and child—
All knew but none had seen him since the eve
Appointed for his bridal. Far and wide
Luzelia wandered and her voice went up
On every breeze; no answering voice was heard.

VIII.

Brief summer, briefer autumn passed, all streams
Vanished before the universal frost,
That silently, with a resistless power,
Suspended life; on every shaggy cliff
The beaded hail hung like a robe of gems
Beneath the gleaming glimpses of the sun
Or moon, when from her rolling track she flung
A flood of phantom light; on every thatch
Icicles, like Doric pillars, in the light
Of woodfires streaming through the lattice glowed,
And drifted cones of snow among the boughs
Of thick-leaved pines perennial everywhere
Lay deeply—pallid white above rich green—

Hoar winter in the arms of virgin spring—
Death on the bosom of undying Life!
And the long season of chill'd verdure passed,
And desolating winds to farthest North,
To Arctic seas, Spitzbergen and the Isles
Of everlasting iciness, with moans,
Departed at the hest of May-morn suns.
Yet came no tidings of the lost, the loved,
And poor Luzelia lingered o'er the looks,
The smiles, the tender words, the oft-sealed vow—
The last of lost Leoni—and the dreams
Of years that had a fearful waking now,
And broken images of early love,
Till her whole heart gushed out and she would fain
Have flown to the lone wilderness and died
Where last he might have pressed the moss or leaves.

IX.

'Tis easy to resign the breaking heart
On Passion's altar; 'tis an angel's task
To live when life hath ceased to be a joy,
Buffet the billows of despairing thoughts,
Baffle disguised temptation, and bear up
Beneath a burden martyrs never bore,
Sickness of soul, that o'er earth's joyance throws
The lurid hue of a distempered mind,
And serge-clad poverty, whose daily bread
Unceasing labour only can procure.
These, in the voiceless anguish of a heart
Full of intensest feeling, and a soul
Haunted by wild imaginations dim,
Wavering and vasty as the countless forms
On Shetland Skerries when the storm is up,
With meekness and a patient tenderness,
An earnest and heart-gushing Love, that fell
Upon her mother's darkened sympathy,
Like a skill'd leech's well-tim'd liniment

Upon a warrior's wound—sublimely, these
Luzelia bore through months of vague belief
Of undetermined ill; and she could smile
Sometimes, and feel the burden from her heart
Lifted by an invisible power awhile,
And then her voice, narrating legends old
Of Doffrafield, put on a cheerfulness
That went quite through her aged mother's heart.
Then the pale palsied pilgrim would look up
And bless her daughter with a trembling hand,
And her dimm'd eyes were lighted up with fires
From the altar of her youth, and her weak voice
Came o'er Luzelia like a benison
From the far world on whose veil'd shore she stood.

X.

So Time passed on, and the poor heart-sick girl
Alone remembered lost Leoni now.
Friendship is but the outward foil of men,
'The fleecy foam emitted from life's sea
Seen only in the swirling wake the barque
In its fair voyage leaves behind; but Love,
(Not the gross passion of the buskin'd stage,
The glare of eyes, the bubble of blown cheeks,
The start, the feign'd devotion and wild speech)
Love lingereth by the shrine when cold and dark
And offereth up its orisons the same;
Love clingeth to the wreck when wildest winds
Sweep darkest clouds before them and the voice
Of upturned ocean wails like dying men;
And, more than all, Love in the hourly cares
And deep anxieties of humble life
To household hearth and board and pallet bed
Beareth the settled memory of the lost,
'The sanctified regard, the chastened woe
Of an all-feeling and benignant heart.

XI.

'Twas winter midnight, and Luzelia sat
Beside the death-bed of her mother, last
Of all her kindred; o'er the pallet fell
The wavering rushlight, and the mossy cot
Within was silent, save when feeble moans,
Like spirit whispers low, stole from a heart
Too wasted now to bear much agony.
Without, the winds were loud, and mount and vale
Through all their vast and solemn solitudes
Replied to the wild spirit of the storm;
And the cold moon through huddled clouds appeared
Fitfully and ghostlike; and oft the wolf
Yelled in the agony of famishing
From perpendicular rocks, whence caverns yawned
Below, and glaciers hung on all above.
Luzelia watched and wept not in the depth
Of visible desolation; when she lost
Leoni, the deep wellsprings of her heart
Dried up, and left her like a branching palm
Amid the Desert; she had lent her shade
To a poor wayworn pilgrim who had borne
The burden and the heat of many a day,
And now beneath the shadow of her leaves,
And on the bosom of her solitude,
That pilgrim sunk to sleep—earth's silent sleep—
With her deep-vein'd and bony hand upon
Luzelia's bow'd head resting; and the words
Last heard from her pale lips were words of peace
And blessing; and her parting breath went forth
In the cold kiss of death!—Luzelia knelt
Beside the death-bed and her heart rose up
In prayer, and in her loneliness and grief
Strength was vouchsafed unto her to compose
The dead for burial. And she slept that night!

XII.

The yearning pathos of the heart bereaved
Time mellows in its silent soothing lapse,
And deepest ills and deprivations lose
The lurid hue and leaden heaviness,
The mazy and bewildering dream of woe.
Not the sun's shadows on the dial's disk,
But the mind's thoughts upon the busy brain
Metre out o'erpassing periods; hours of grief
No famed clepsydra ever measured well
Nor modern instrument; deserted life
'Neath reed-thatch'd cottage on the drearest marge
Of bosky dell, o'erpillar'd by wild rocks,
And bordered round by furze and fern and gorse
And matted briars and tangled underwood,
Lingers and lingers like a new-made bride
Beside the death-bed of her love's best lord.
But years, and the deep thoughts they bring with them,
Tame down the spirit as they bow the frame,
And leave behind affections purified
Though undiminished in their heart-felt power—
Fervent though calm—deep like the stillest stream—
A sealed-up fountain brimming with the thoughts
That made earth paradise in happier days.

XIII.

Precept and sentiment are idle things,
And so is love's romance in sickly tales
Of aromatic fabulists, whose sighs
Are frequent as the free unchartered air;
But just example, in all ways of life,
Is as a visible divinity,
That o'er all minds hath power and in all hearts
Resteth, as rivers, gliding through green meads,
Where cowslips blossom, rest in sunny seas.—
Luzelia's mild, dim, melancholy smile,
And quiet step and soft though faded eye,

And mellow voice heard in her loneliness,
And chariness of mind and ready hand
In the acquittance of kind offices,
Had touched, as with the altar fire of love,
All hearts that yearned for kindred sympathies
And blest affiance in their rugged path.
And suitors, such as fathers could approve,
Many and oft appeared—were mildly heard—
And went their way, not scorned though unreceived,
Less in pride's anger than in mournfulness;
For still she was the tomb-lamp of the dead,
Keeping lone watch o'er buried memories,
And ne'er ungracious in a thought or speech
Save when they named Leoni doubtfully.
There were not wanting tongues in that wild land,
As everywhere, to babble of the dead
And wrong the living, and full oft their shafts
Pierced lone Luzelia's bosom to the core.

XIV.

The Maiden's lot was dark, yet all was peace
Within her humble cot, and cheerfulness
Around it, for the spirit, that, of old,
Hallowed its hearth, had left a blessing there,
A delicate and music-breathing Ariel,
Whose plumage never ruffled, sun or storm.
It was the Miners' Holiday; and joy
Sent forth the voice of lustihood—the sound
Of Scandinavian harp o'er all the hills;
And prouder merriment was never heard
E'en in Valhalla's azured palaces
When the Valkyriur, in rainbow paths,
Usher young fallen heroes to their home.
Luzelia threw her cheeriness of heart
O'er Toil's sole yearly festival, and sung
A song that had a touch of gladness in 't,
Though, as she sang, she could not choose but think

How lost Leoni at such times stood up
 Beautiful as Balder—sun-god—in his pride.
 Then filled her faded eyes, and, with much thanks,
 Up from the wooded dell the Miners passed.

XV.

Evening drew on, and at her cottage door
 Luzelia rested, sadder far than wont,
 (Revel and mirth are ministers of woe
 To the sick heart, that enters not their haunt,)
 When down the shelvy rocks a Miner leapt
 Wildly and with dark words of strange import
 Led her along the precipice, and up
 Steep forest-paths, to a deserted lode,
 Round whose black marge a huddled crowd had met.
 “’Tis strange!” said one. “This mine hath not been
 wrought
 “For years, but left to goblins and blind owls!
 “I well remember (I was then a boy)
 “When the old Dane—a hoary locust left
 “Out of the slaughtered host—came one bright morn
 “And bade us lift the ladders from the lode
 “And gash the pillars of the roof and leave
 “The plundered hell to bats—their rightful home.
 “Well, here this body of stone, that once was flesh,
 (“’Tis petrified ’mong minerals of the mine)
 “In his blind hurry to the bridal-feast—
 “’Twas dark as Hela—fell and died unknown!”
 “Give way, it is Luzelia!” every eye
 Fastened upon her face, as she drew near,
 And every lip was mute; one moment passed
 Of deep, soul-piercing earnestness of gaze,
 Then her brow lightened, and her features glowed
 With all the beauty of her virgin youth,
 And her breast heaved in panting sobs,—and then
 She fell upon the blackened corse and cried—
 “Leoni! ’tis Leoni! said I not

“He kept his troth till death? Oh, ’tis not Death!

“It gives me life, Leoni! no, not Death!”

* * * * *

—In the green dell there is a ruined hut,
And on the margin of that old dark mine
A wide grave with a rudely graven stone,
That bears Luzelia’s and Leoni’s name.

B b

THE EVENING STAR.

I.

ERE lingering sunlight leaves the western sky
And mellow tintings mingle with the gloom,
The crescent gilds the soft blue arch on high,
With beams that seem in upper air to bloom,
And down the cope of heaven afar,
A world of beauty, bliss and love,
Gleams brightly forth the Evening Star,
The loveliest light of all the host above.

II.

Cold searching science may the spheres explore,
And yon vast systems learnedly unfold,
But, wrapt in beauty's spell, I scorn the lore
And lightly all such withering knowledge hold;
When fancy revels in the skies,
And rose-wreath'd bowers are breathing balm,
O who would know the mysteries
Of heaven—and all the glorious scene uncharm?

III.

Let man, lone habitant of this dark sphere,
Deem yon bright orbs the starry halls of love,
Where souls congenial meet that sorrowed here,
And through elysian groves in rapture rove!
Rend not away the magic veil
That brightens beauties seen afar;
Belie not fancy's fairy tale,
That sees a paradise in every star!

IV.

Thou Evening Star! o'er yon blue mountain sinking,
Thy radiant beams along the white clouds burn,

And, as I gaze, my wandering soul is thinking
Of past delights that never can return;
Thou art a friend beloved, and long
I've told my sorrows all to thee,
For I, a feeling son of song,
Have been the sport of wayward destiny.

V.

Oft on the hill-top 'mid embowering woods
I sit when night relieves my heart from care,
And nothing earthly on my soul intrudes,
As in the world's dark strife and daylight's glare,
And watch thy light, sweet Evening Star!
And think how dear a home thou art,
Shrined in the ethereal sky afar,
To the sad spirit and the suffering heart.

VI.

Well have the wild-soul'd bards of Yemen deemed
'Thine orb the dwelling of the great and good,
Where Indra's glory hath forever beamed
Since from the skies rolled Ganges' holy flood,
And 'mid the Swerga's hallowed bowers
Dwelt suras pure and glendoveers,
Happy as heaven's own living flowers,
Unchanging as the lapse of endless years.

VII.

'There pure ones dwell, forever blest—and there
Chant songs, whose music sometimes steals away,
And faintly floats along the moonlight air,
Like the low warblings of a seraph's lay;
Around the holy shrine they throng
In sacred groups, while soft perfume
Waves in the breath of glowing song,
And soars to God, like spirits from the tomb.

VIII.

Now in the budding springtime of the year
Young hearts will blossom in the smiles of love,
And sunny eyes, gem of the starry sphere!
Delight in thee;—lone wandering through the grove,
Where fanning airs 'mid green leaves play,
Lovers entranced gaze on thy beams,
And paint a paradise far away
Mid groves and flowers and birds and murmuring
streams.

IX.

And oh, how lovely are their visions! Light
Descends from heaven on love's first blissful dream,
And on the heart falls all that meets the sight
In rainbow hues with ever-varying gleam.
If e'er on earth we can define
The joys that prophets tell of heaven,
'Tis when young hearts in love divine
Blend like the blue and purple hues of even.

X.

But love is madness in a world like this—
It smiles to agonize—it charms to slay!
Demons watch o'er earth's holiest scenes of bliss,
And laugh at sorrow nothing can allay.
Fame, knowledge, wealth and pride and power,
And love and joy are all in vain;
'They live and bloom one little hour,
Then fade like Evening's Star and sink to pain.

THE SON OF GENIUS.

I.

'Twas summer evening and the fair blue sky
In rosy beauty hung o'er land and sea,
And to the poet's visionary eye
Burned with light gushing from eternity;
The soft sweet airs of heaven breathed o'er his brow
As he gazed on the lovely scene below
His solitary chamber—rich and bright,
And watched the mellowing shadows as they fell
O'er flowery vales and green isles robed in light,
Till darkness dimmed the scenes he loved so well.

II.

But vainly beauty smiles when the heart bleeds
In silent, untold agony of wo;
Nought of fair forms the withering spirit heeds—
All sight and sound is mockery; grief doth grow
Deeper and wilder amid joy and mirth,
And sorrow veils this bright and lovely earth
In darkness and in dreariness—and all
Seems cold and hollow in the ways of men;
And the dark spirit wears a living pall
Of deathless death—it cannot smile again.

III.

Oh! who can tell how hard it is to wear
A mirthful look that hides a broken heart?
How deep and desolate is that despair,
Which sickly smiles of forced delight impart?
'Tis awful misery to seem in joy;
Smiles on the lip—tears in the wandering eye;

Hope on the brow—despair within the soul!
 Oh, why to man are all earth's sorrows given—
 The thousand woes that mock at man's control,
 But from earth's griefs to turn his thoughts to heaven?

IV.

The bright creations of his soaring thought
 Had from the young bard passed away, and now
 He wept o'er all his mighty mind had wrought;
 And his heart's darkness gloom'd along his brow,
 And fearful forms appeared and bade him look
 Upon their ghastly horrors—and he took
 The terrors of their wild and withering eyes
 E'en to his bosom's core, and o'er him came
 That hollowness of sufferance which tries
 The spirit more than rack or bickering flame.

V.

He saw not—heard not—thought not of the crowd
 That passed him joyously on either hand;
 His spirit writhed within a shuddering shroud,
 And o'er him Genius waved his magic wand.
 (Genius! bright child of heaven—a god of earth!
 Despair and Death forever give thee birth;
 Thou angel heir whose heritage is pain!
 Whose rapture, anguish and all countless woes;
 Whose only joy is sorrow's mournful strain—
 Whose only hope this being's early close!)

VI.

Earth's charms availed not; sadness in him grew
 Darker and deeper till it sunk in gloom;
 Time o'er his bosom poured its night-shade dew,
 And Death called on him from the yawning tomb—
 Stretched forth his skeleton arm and beckoned on
 The suffering soul whose meteor course was done—

Rising in glory and the pride of fame,
Soaring in beauty on its starry way,
Then bursting o'er the ruin of a name--
The glorious vision of a stormy day!

VII.

There was no beauty in this world to him—
No charm, no hope, no comfort, and he felt
Power from his spirit, vigour from each limb,
Life from his heart, departing; and he knelt
In lone devotion to his God and prayed
That Fate's dread arrow might not be delayed,
And yet not pierce his bosom unprepared!
“FATHER! thou knowest all my thoughts and deeds,
The woes I've borne alone—the woes I've shared—
And thou wilt purify the heart that bleeds.”

VIII.

But nothing can from human hearts expel
The fear of death—it is not weal nor wo,
That withers up the spirit, heaven nor hell;
It is that awful void--that gulf below
All reach of thought—that boundless depth of gloom
Which hangs forever o'er the unknown tomb;
No eye can span it and no thought unfold--
Hopes, fears and passions and all human powers
Perish before the mystery untold,
Searching in vain for Eden's holy bowers.

IX.

And death to him had terrors--oh, it had
Terrors for thee, almighty Son of God!
Oft callous, fears are felt not by the bad
At the dread voice that summons to the sod;
The doubtfulness of good that virtue feels
Oft o'er the heart in withering anguish steals,

And clouds the closing hour of sinless life
With fears that hardened guilt denies; for, oh,
Goodness doth question its own worth, though rife
With all that hallows earth's intensest woe.

X.

The mournful bard—life's best affections gone,
Its kindly charities and hopes of fame,
Mused darkly on the ills of fate alone—
Continual sorrow and a blasted name,
Till in the pale light of his bosom's shrine
Appeared a form majestic and divine;
Mysterious greatness gleamed along his brow—
His air breathed awe—his voice was like the sea's;
His eye illumed all nature in its glow—
And thus he spake the spirit's mysteries:—

XI.

“Son of the Skies! thou who dost oft commune
With the ethereal stars when sleep locks up
Life's founts of bitterness in night's still noon:
Thou wilt not always drink this poison cup
Of wretchedness allotted thee below;
Thou wilt not always wear upon thy brow
The visible torture of thy bleeding heart;
Thy sunken cheek and hollow eye shall yet
Smile ere thy spirit from the world depart,
And coming hours shall teach thee to forget.

XII.

“Thy toil hath been for greatness and for fame,
And thou hast panted in the poisoned air
Of hate and envy to achieve a name
For the fool's mockery; and thought and care,
And vigilant observance and much pain,
And watchings long thou could'st not bear again,

Have been rewarded by a damning curse—
The spleen of bastard wit and envy's gall;
And low, base foes, whom fiends could make no worse,
Have shouted o'er the ruins of thy fall.

XIII.

“One look of thine could blast them into death,
But, mid the locust plague, thine eye would tire
Of slaying, and the poison of their breath
Taint and obscure thy spirit's holy fire.
Pass o'er them—stoop not to their scope—'tis vain
To battle with the fitchew; canst thou reign
And banquet on thy proud and just applause
Without the envenomed chalice, that will bear
Death to thy vitals? In a lofty cause
The world will crown thee with thy heart's despair.

XIV.

“But shouldst thou bask in glory's fairest light,
Canst thou make league with death to sound thy praise?
Or hope to hear amid sepulchral night
The voice of fame that charmed thy mortal days?
Can mouldering dust resume its form again
Or thy soul hover o'er this realm of pain
To drink the incense of a crowd, whose breath,
Ere an hour wings its unreturning flight,
May fan the cold, unearthly brow of death,
And all their memories sink to endless night?

XV.

“No! glory unbeheld is grief and shame—
The spirit's power is wasted upon dust;
Virtue and goodness never lead to fame,
Nor breathing pictures of the wise and just.
Fiends love not what they cannot falsify,
And there *are* fiends who never dwelt on high.
Let Genius dip his pencil in the gloom,
That o'er man's heart comes from the depths of hell—

Ages will weep above his laurelled tomb,
And immortality his triumphs swell.

XVI.

“ Yet thou must soar; immortal spirits wear
Robes coloured in the skies—they cannot rest
Mid earth’s cold multitudes; the holy air
Near heaven they breathe, and are supremely blest
When the false world and all its woes forgot,
They feel their own divinity; thy lot,
Lowly with men, is holy and sublime
With angels and wing’d glories at the hour
Of inspiration, when thy soul can climb
Heaven’s gate and hail each spirit in his bower.

XVII.

“ Less for the world’s applause, more for thy own,
Howe’er, in humble consciousness of all
The gifts of God, toil thou till crowns are won
Of virtue and of glory; see thou fall
Not from the principles of goodness given
To all earth’s sons by kind, indulgent heaven!
Despair not of thy meed! though dark the hour
Of disappointment, put the armour on
Of faith and perseverance, and thy power
Will strengthen still when centuries have gone.”

XVIII.

Ceased the deep voice—the ideal phantom fled;
But left that comfort which reflection gives
To virtue in affliction—well ’twere said,
He lives to glory who to goodness lives.
O’er the young bard new freshened feelings rise,
And thoughts of beauty beaming from the skies,
And gay hope, like a sunbow, round his heart
Glitters and colours every feeling there,
And as his dark and dreary thoughts depart,
He feels,—while heaven awaits, let none despair!

THE PROPHET'S MALISON.

And Elijah, the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab--As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word.

I.

THE apostate king of Israel's holy land
Was revelling in Samaria's idol bowers,
And round him danced and sung a harlot band
To soothe remorseful sin's long lingering hours;—
The fair Zidonian wandered through the grove,
The heathen queen of lawless faith and love.

II.

There Ahab lay, with pomp pavilioned round,
Couches of gold and gorgeous canopies,
And wanton harps of most melodious sound,
And robes that wore the rainbow's mingled dyes;—
There nothing lacked of his luxurious show
Save God's approval as he looked below.

III.

There wreathing flowers hung breathing rich perfume,
And fragrant fruit of every form and name,
And radiant beauty, in voluptuous bloom,
To Ahab's bower, a willing victim came;
Not unobserved by Zidon's daughter, who
Plunged him in crime and gloried in the view.

IV.

Yet oft amid the music and the mirth
His dark brow quivered and his eye grew wild;
Forms passed before him not of mortal birth,
And gleamed along his brain, and darkly smiled

With that prophetic look which probes and sears
The heart, and in a moment does the work of years.

V.

Beneath the glory of his gorgeous show
A viper feasted on his heart, and none
Save his false queen, could soothe the awful woe
Of him who groaned—a slave upon a throne!
She o'er him held the power of crime and he
Bowed shuddering to her bloody sovereignty.

VI.

Israel's gray fathers by the wayside stood
Communing mournfully on other days,
And oft they saw the awful sign of blood
Shoot o'er the wrathful sky its fiery rays;
And then they gazed upon the groves of Baal
And shrieked to see the warning portent fall.

VII.

But save to eyes of faith no sign appeared,
And Ahab revelled on in darker guilt,
Nor Syrian king nor slaughtering angel feared;
And by his side she lay whose hand had spilt
The blood of God's high prophets and profaned
The temple where His visible presence reigned.

VIII.

And each had sinned till heaven could bear no more.
And mid their wildest riot, most profane,
A tall majestic shadow stood before
Their blasted eyes—now downcast all in vain;
The sable garb—the hoary beard—the tread,
Solemn as death, shook Ahab's soul with dread.

IX.

For well he knew the prophet of the Lord,
And awfully he feared to meet him there,
Amid those idol groves and bowers abhorred;
And his heart quailed in horror and despair
When with uplifted eyes and hands outspread,
The Seer of God his awful message said:—

X.

“Hear, rebel king! and thou, false heathen, hear!
Thus saith the Lord and thus it shall be done;
Thrice o’er this land shall pass the death-wing’d year
Beneath the scorchings of the cloudless sun;
Nor rain, nor dew, nor vapour shall assuage
The burning heat in its wide-wasting rage.

XI.

“All streams shall vanish and all fountains dry,
And still the mighty sun shall burn and burn,
Till stiffening lips can frame no dying cry,
Till withered hearts to cracking masses turn,
And chords and sinews cleave unto the bone,
And the flesh shrink and harden into stone.

XII.

“Groves, gardens, vineyards—all green things shall fail,
And desolation reign o’er all the land;
Proud men—fair women, choaking, ghastly pale,
In vain shall struggle with impotent hand
To end their agonies;—all earth shall lie
Blackening in barrenness ’neath a burning sky.

XIII.

“The lips shall feel no moisture in the breath—
E’en on the corse the famished worm shall die,
And death go slaughtering o’er the wreck of death,
Amid the still, unutterable agony;

The babe shall die—to the hot bosom pressed—
Pressing its withered lips unto its mother's breast.

XIV.

"The prince and lazar, and the lord and slave,
Shall writhe and agonize and gasp for breath
And perish side by side—and one wide grave,
The lake's exhausted gurge, shall hold them; Death
Shall ride victorious, mid low gurgling moans,
To slaughter o'er a nation's skeletons.

XV.

"Amid the thick, intolerable glare
A dull, dead sound shall murmur evermore,
And flocks and herds pant in the sweltering air
And lie down in the channel that before
Held many waters, and devour the sand
That yet is moist. And Israel's sons shall stand

XVI.

"Gazing until their eyes weep blood upon
Creation's fiery furnace to behold
The beauty of a cloud—there shall be none!
No more the shepherd need to watch his fold,
No more the vintager his vines—no more
The merchant hail his vessel from the shore.

XVII.

"Yon holy mountains from their cloudy height
Shall waft no breezes to the burning vale,
But savage beasts shall yell in wild affright
From rock and cave till sense and motion fail,
And the black leafless forests moan and sigh
Between the dying earth and all-destroying sky.

XVIII.

"Then thou, proud king! e'en in this idol grove
Amid thy host of deities shalt feel

The wrath of an offended God, and prove
His penal might; here thou shalt pray and kneel,
E'en in the house of Baal—his house of crime—
And weary heaven for mercy in that time.

XIX.

“But vainly shalt thou ask it—all as vain
As God did long beseech thee to return
And live—thou wouldst not hearken then—again
Thou shalt not hear his voice! o'er thee shall burn,
And thy idolaters his fiercest ire
Till Israel's sons are purified by fire.

XX.

“All earth shall blacken in a sea of flame
Till years have rolled their desolating way—
Till God restores the glory of the name
That Israel bore beneath his holy sway;
Thus saith the Lord! Prepare to meet thy doom!
For vengeance o'er the idol land shall come!”

XXI.

The prophet vanished from the monarch's eye,
Who stood there, chained by agonizing fear;
His dark form towering on the crimson sky—
His voice still ringing in the false king's ear.
In waves of purple flame sunk the hot sun—
The years of wrath and terror have begun.

VISIONS OF ROMANCE.

I.

WHEN dark-brow'd midnight o'er the slumbering world
Mysterious shadows and bewildering throws,
And the tired wings of human thought are furled,
And sleep descends like dew upon the rose,
How full of bliss the poet's vigil hour
When o'er him elder Time hath magic power!

II.

Before his eye past ages stand revealed
When feudal chiefs held lordly banquettings,
In the spoil revelling of flood and field,
Among their vassals proud unquestioned kings:
While honoured minstrels round the ample board
The lays of love or songs of battle poured.

III.

Mid loud *wassail* and legend quaint and jest,
The horn-rimm'd goblet pledge of heart and hand,
To knightly lips in solemn faith is pressed,
And rose-lipped mirth waits on the warrior-band,
To whom the brand and cup alike are dear,
The storm of battle and the banquet's cheer.

IV.

Throned on his *dais* the proud old chief looked o'er
The lengthening lines of haughty barons there,
And listened to the minstrel's rhythmic lore;
Or boon accorded to the suppliant's prayer;
Or planned the chase through wood and mountain dell,
Or roused his guests by feuds remembered well.

V.

The dinted helmet, with its broken crest,
The serried sabre and the shattered shield
Hung round the wainscot dark and well expressed
That wild, fierce pride which scorned unscathed to
yield;
And pictures there with dusky glory rife
From age to age bore down stern characters of strife.

VI.

Amid long lines of glorious ancestry,
Whose eyes flashed o'er them from the old gray walls,
What craven quails at danger's lightning eye?
What warrior blenches when his brother falls?
Bear witness, Cressy and red Agincourt!
Bosworth and Bannockburn and Marston Moor!

VII.

The long lone corridors—the antlered hall—
The massive walls—the allcommanding towers—
Where revel reigned and masquerading ball,
And beauty won stern warriors to her bowers—
In ancient grandeur o'er the spirit move
With all their forms of chivalry and love.

VIII.

The voice of centuries bursts upon the soul—
Long-buried ages wake and live again—
Past feats of fame and deeds of glory roll,
Achieved for ladye-love in knighthood's reign;
And all the simple state of olden Time
Assumes a garb majestic and sublime.

IX.

The steel-clad champion on his vaulting steed,
The mitred primate, and the Norman lord,

The peerless maid awarding valour's meed,
And the meek vestal who her God adored—
The pride, the pomp, the power and charm of earth
From Fancy's dome of living thought come forth.

X.

'The sacred *oriflamme* in war's red tide
Waves mid the shivering shock of lance and brand,
And trump-like voices burst in shouts of pride
O'er foes whose blood hath stained the wasted land;
Hark! through the convent-shades triumphal songs!
Lo! the rich shrine!—thus saints avenge our wrongs!

XI.

O'er kneeling penitents at the abbey's shrine
Absolving voices speak God's benison,
And lonely cloisters echo prayers divine
From many a holy, world-forsaking nun,
Before the image of the Crucified
Bowed in prostration of all worldly pride.

XII.

The pale-brow'd vestal and the dark stoled friar,
The beaded monk whose heart is in his grave,
Raise their low voices in the holy choir,
While in response the solemn yewtrees wave;
And through the cloisters and lone aisles they sigh
That hope smiles not for them beneath the sky.

XIII.

Beyond the holy walls stern warriors sleep
Who gloried in their high-born ancients;
Whose war-steeds erst in many a desperate leap
O'er lance and spear went on right gloriously—
Carved on the tombstone, rests the brave knight's form—
Where is the knight? Ask not the battenning worm!

XIV.

The feast is o'er, the huntsman's course is done,
The trump of war—the shrill horn sounds no more—
The heroic revellers from the hall have gone—
The lone blast moans the ruined castle o'er!
The spell of beauty and the pride of power
Have passed forever from the feudal tower.

XV.

No more the drawbridge echoes to the tread
Of visored knights o'ercanopied with gold,
O'er mouldering gates and crumbling archways spread,
Dark ivy waves in many a mazy fold,
Where chiefs flashed vengeance from their lightning
glance,
And grasped the brand and couched the conquering
lance.

XVI.

But all hath not in silence perished here—
The deep, still voice of lost power will be heard;
Mysterious spectres in the gloom appear
As still in death they would be shunned and feared;
All is not lost—the bright electric air
Glows with the spirits of the great that were!

XVII.

One generation from another draws
Greatness and glory adding to its own;
It breathes the spirit of the primal laws,
And makes the heart a freeborn nation's throne;
Time treads in dust earth's highest pride and fame,
But thoughts of power forever are the same.

XVIII.

Oh, who so weak as ponder on the tomb?
The dead are nothing!—drink the mountain breeze

Or roam o'er ruins wrapt in ages' gloom,
And hoard thou well Earth's silent mysteries!
The past is written in the lightning's glare
To bid the Future for its doom prepare.

XIX.

The gorgeous pageantry of times gone by,
The tilt, the tournament, the vaulted hall,
Fades in its glory on the spirit's eye,
And fancy's bright and gay creations—all
Sink into dust when reason's searching glance
Unmasks the age of knighthood and romance.

XX.

For fatal feuds from unknown sources sprung,
Raged unrepressed and unappeased by tears;
And (shame to tell!) the royal minstrels sung
Oppression's pœan in those darkened years;
Then empire hung upon the arm of power,
And fate frowned o'er the dark embattled tower.

XXI.

Like lightning lingering on the lurid skies,
Their glories flash along the gloom of years;
The beaconlights of Time to wisdom's eyes
O'er the deep rolling stream of human tears.
Fade! fade! ye visions of antique Romance!
Tower, casque and mace, and helm and bannered
lance!

THE END.





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